

Learning to Play: How working-class lads negotiate working-class physical education

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Abstract

Adults from the middle-classes are up to three times more likely to be regularly involved in sport than those from the working-class. The reason for this participation anomaly has been consistently linked to the differing lifestyles and opportunities to which young people from working and middle-class backgrounds are exposed. More specifically, working-class children are more likely to develop narrow, class-related leisure profiles and sporting repertoires during their childhood that serve to limit the likelihood of them remaining physically active in adulthood. In relation to this, one of the key aims of physical education (PE) in mainstream schools is to develop the range of skills and knowledge for all pupils and widen their sporting repertoires in an attempt to promote long-term participation throughout their lives. However, not only has PE provision in British mainstream schools been shown to be unsuccessful in promoting working-class pupils' sporting/ability development, some suggest that the subject may even be perpetuating the social difference that has been shown to exist in relation to sports participation between social class groups.

In order to address these issues the study set out to examine the extent to which the wider social background of white, working-class 'lads' and the actions and attitudes of their PE teachers came to impact on the way the lads influenced and experienced their PE curriculum/lessons. It also aimed to examine the impact that school PE then had on their sporting repertoires and participation in sport/active leisure outside of school.

A total of 24 days were spent in Ayrefield Community School (ACS), a purposively selected, working-class state secondary school as part of a case study design. Over 60 practical PE lessons were observed that led to differing roles being adopted and guided conversations being conducted before, during, and after these lessons. Eight focus group interviews were also conducted with specifically chosen lads as well as one with the four members of male PE staff. Additional observations were also carried out during off-site trips, external visits, and in a range of classroom-based lessons. The findings were then considered and examined in relation to the work of the sociologists Norbert Elias and Pierre Bourdieu.

The findings revealed that the pressures related to the modern education system and the social expectations linked to their working-class backgrounds caused a split between the lads at ACS in to three broad groups, namely: Problematics, Participants and Performers. These groupings came to impact on the ways that these lads engaged and achieved in school as well as the ways in which they came to negotiate and experience PE. The 'Problematic' group held largely negative views of education, but valued PE, especially when playing football, the 'Participants' were relatively successful at school yet apathetic regarding the content and delivery of their PE lessons, and a Performer group of lads emerged who engaged and achieved highly at school and participated in a range of activities in PE, but showed little intention of participating outside of school due to their pragmatic attitude to 'learning' in PE.

Despite these differing school and PE experiences between the lads' groups, the potential and actual impact of school PE on their sporting repertoires, skills, and interests was ultimately constrained by a range of issues. In the first instance the lads' narrow, class-related leisure profiles and sporting repertoires linked closely to recreational participation with friends, alongside a lack of proactive parenting were significant limiting factors. In addition, the ability of some lads to constrain the actions of PE staff and peers to get what they wanted in PE rather than what they needed, and the negative views of most lads to skill development and structured PE lessons meant that PE at ACS was never likely to have a positive impact on the sporting repertoires and participation types/levels of its male pupils either currently or in their future lives.

Declaration

I confirm that this thesis is my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at this or any other higher education institution

Signed:

Date:

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Reflective bio-narration

Having been born and brought up less than a mile from the coalmine in South Yorkshire where the miners' strike began in 1984 (Cortonwood), I have always been aware of the particular sense of community and patriarchy synonymous with traditional working class-communities. As I grew older and became increasingly aware of the concept of social class, I also became more conscious of the extent to which the occupations of my parents (sewing machinist and steel worker), their level of education, and the subsequent lifestyle that we led, came to impact on my own experiences and attitudes. Holidays in the UK, a strong family tradition of watching and playing football, and long periods spent outdoors playing among friends were just some of the ways that the attitudes and actions of my parents came to influence my early life and interests.

My transition to the local secondary school, however, came to be a significant influence on me for a range of reasons. The school had long been a well-renowned grammar school (with former pupils including William Hague) before its transition to a comprehensive school in the mid 1970s. Although situated in a traditional working-class area, the enduring 'traditional approach' to education and the ingrained banding system (both of which the school worked hard to maintain) meant that I was exposed to peers and friends from very different backgrounds to myself. In terms of sport and PE more specifically, a grammar-school ethos also remained. This meant that the large PE department clearly valued traditional, competitive team sports and we were 'actively encouraged' to take part in school sport fixtures and PE lessons in a manner more synonymous with the 'muscular Christian' ethos of public schools. Overall, therefore, I was very much exposed to a school effect that came to strongly influence how I achieved academically, what I played at school, and perhaps most importantly how I came to view education, PE, and sport.

It was undoubtedly these experiences that led me to want to attend university to become a PE teacher. I knew first hand that the subject of PE had the potential to impact positively on the sporting interests, skills, and repertoires of all pupils, regardless of background. Therefore, upon my first teaching post in a strong working-class community I was probably more conscious than most as to why pupils arrived at school with such narrow sporting interests, and more determined than many to address this through PE and school sport experiences. In addition, I became increasingly conscious that not all students were committed or enthused by this aspect of their education. Indeed one of stark realities that came to me was that despite my overwhelmingly positive experience of the type of PE and school sport we were exposed to at school, this was almost certainly not the case for many.

Overall, therefore, when considering the topic of this PhD study some twenty years after starting secondary school, the impact of social class background, schooling and PE/school sport emerged very quickly and starkly as the intended focus. Initially I was interested in the extent to which family background comes to impact on what young males take part in during their leisure time and how they come to view school and education on arrival at secondary school. By extension, I was also keen to examine how male pupils from very similar backgrounds to myself were influenced by their time at secondary school (and PE specifically) in relation to their attitudes, actions and sporting/leisure lifestyles. Finally, having been a PE teacher myself, I was also keen to examine the extent to which the PE staff were willing and able to provide the types of PE experiences that could facilitate a positive impact on the way the pupils engaged in both PE and sport.

Ultimately, therefore, my own personal and professional background, along with my knowledge of Ayrefield as a community, meant that a case study of Ayrefield Community school became the very basis of the thesis that aimed to examine these issues in detail.

List of Abbreviations

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| ACS | Ayrefield Community School |
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| BTEC | Business and Technology Education Council – Specialist work-related qualifications. |
| CRB | Criminal Records Bureau – A record of an individual's criminal convictions (replaced by DBS check in 2012 – see below). |
| DBS | Disclosure and Barring Service - A record of an individual's criminal convictions (previously known as CRB check). |
| EU | European Union |
| FSM | Free School Meals – Eligibility of pupils to receive free school meals is an accepted measure of socio-economic disadvantage. |
| GCSE | General Certificate of Secondary Education – Subject specific qualification typically taken by pupils aged 14-16. |
| HRE | Health Related Exercise – Activities aimed at improving the health and fitness levels required for sporting activity. |
| KS | Key Stage – One of four fixed stages into which the national curriculum is divided (e.g. KS3 – years 7, 8, and 9 in secondary school). |
| ITT | Initial Teacher Training - Teacher training pathway following undergraduate degree. |
| LSOA | Lower Super Output Area – A geographic hierarchy designed to report statistics for small, specific areas of the UK (typically involving 1,500 people). |
| LA | Local Authority |
| LSA | Learning Support Assistant |
| NA | National Average |
| NCPE | National Curriculum for Physical Education - The statutory programme of study and attainment targets for physical education at key stages 1 to 4. |
| NS-SEC | National Statistic Socio-economic Classification – Primary social classification system in UK. |
| OAA | Outdoor Adventurous Activity – An area of the PE curriculum usually involving study outside (e.g. orienteering). |
| Ofsted | Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills – Non-ministerial department of the UK government responsible for the inspection and regulation of services that care for children and young people. |
| ONS | Office for National Statistics |
| PA | Physical Activity |

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| PE | Physical Education |
| PEH | Physical Education and Health |
| SEN | Special Educational Needs |

Key Terms

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| Academic Capital | The potential of an individual's education and other academic experience to be used to gain a place in society. Not measured solely by the duration of schooling—but instead is made up of many different factors, including the individual's academic transmission from his/her family and status of the academic institutions attended (Bourdieu, 1986). |
| Banding | A system in which school pupils are grouped into broad ability bands. Differential treatment of bands by teachers may result in pupils internalizing positive or negative self-esteem that then impacts on educational performance. |
| Cultural Capital | The social assets of a person (education, intellect, style of speech and dress, etc.) that promote social mobility in a stratified society. Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital refers to the collection of symbolic elements such as skills, tastes, posture, clothing, mannerisms, material belongings, and credentials that one acquires through being part of a particular social class and can be a major source of social inequality (Bourdieu, 1984). |
| Deindustrialisation | A process of social and economic change caused by the removal or reduction of industrial capacity or activity in a country or region (especially heavy industry or manufacturing). |
| Deliberate Inculcation | A term used by Bourdieu (1986) to describe a 'scholastic investment strategy' on behalf of parents, which involves 'work', aimed at optimising their children's chances of success. Although this usually involves academic support at home, some authors also refer to sporting (tennis lessons) and cultural (piano lessons) investment by parents. |
| Doxa | A term used by Bourdieu (1977) to denote a society's taken for granted, unquestioned truths, and the sphere of that which may be openly contested and discussed. Doxa sets limits on social mobility within the social space by helping to set social limits along with the "sense of one's place" that is closely connected with the idea that "this is not for us". |
| Economic Capital | Refers to economic resources, such as cash and property (Bourdieu, 1972). |
| Educability | The extent to which a young person is capable of being educated or taught. |
| Figurations | A 'structure of mutually orientated and dependent people' (Elias, 2000: 316) that is the central concept in Eliasian sociology. In other words, one can only understand the behaviour or actions of individual people by |

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| | acknowledging 'their interdependence with the structure of their societies and the figurations that they form with each other' (Elias, 1978:72). |
| Functional Democratisation | Elias (1978) discusses the trend towards reduction of power differentials between rulers and the ruled as well as between different social strata. Power relationships and ratios between a range of social groups have become increasingly reduced between previously dichotomous groups (e.g. teachers and pupils) making it increasingly likely that one group can now influence the actions of another. |
| Game Model | For Elias (1978: 92) the use of people playing a game provides an ideal metaphor for 'people forming societies together' (1978: 92). Also how groups/individuals from differing 'teams' inevitably then come to impact on the intentions and actions (Green, 2000) of those involved in the 'game'. For Elias '(b)eing interdependent with so many people will very probably compel individual people to act in a way they would not act except under compulsion' (Elias, 1978: 94). The power relations involved in these also comes to 'influence the extent to which the moves of one person or group can influence, if not quite determine, the moves of another' (Green, 2000: 183). |
| Habitus | Elias referred to habitus as a person's 'second nature' or 'embodied social learning' that acts as an 'automatic, blindly functioning apparatus of self-control' (Elias, 2000: 368). For Bourdieu (1984, 1994) habitus has more specific mention of lifestyle, values, dispositions, and expectations linked to particular social groups where a person's habitus emerges as a physical embodiment of cultural capital leading to deeply ingrained habits, skills, and dispositions that we possess due to our life experiences. |
| Hegemonic Masculinity | A specific pattern of masculinity that holds the dominant position in a particular society, group, or institution Those able/willing to match the hegemonic masculinity are more likely to benefit from greater degrees of authority, power, and 'privilege' (Connell, 2008: 133), while those with subordinate and/or unconventional identities/sexualities are often marginalized and/or de-valued. |
| Leisure | Leisure is the time, which an individual has free from work or other duties and which may be utilised for the purposes of relaxation, diversion, social achievement, or personal development. |

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| Mainstream School | A mainstream school is any school that principally meets the needs of pupils who do not pay termly fees to attend or suffer from severe disabilities. |
| Physical Literacy | The mastering of fundamental movement and sports skills that permits a child to read their environment and make appropriate decisions. This allows them to move confidently and with control in a wide range of physical activity situations including; throwing, catching, jumping, striking, running, kicking, and balance. |
| Participants | A term created for the purpose of the study that describes a group of male pupils at ACS who were less prominent and in some cases subordinate in school life generally, and in PE lessons specifically. In many cases these employed a 'get in, get through, and get out' approach to education and PE, caused very few problems in lessons, and in most cases were content to be isolated among like-minded peers in their KS4 lessons. |
| Performers | A term created for the purpose of the study that describes a group of males situated in the top groups academically at ACS. As a result they not only undertook different qualifications to their peers (GCSEs and AS Levels), but were involved in a separate timetable that meant that they had little interaction with peers during the school day. Their academic performance, and in many cases sporting ability, meant that they were viewed and treated as an elite group by peers, staff, and even each other. |
| Pedagogic Action | A process where an education system reproduces the distribution of cultural capital among classes based on the existence of a dominant culture. According to Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) the traits and actions linked to the dominant culture can only be received and acquired by subjects that have the 'right' linguistic and cultural competence. As a result, pupils from lower social class groups can come to accept the 'values and meanings of the existing order' as being both natural and legitimate (Webb et al., 2005: 120). For example working-class pupils seeing themselves as 'naturally thick' as they do not match the expectations imposed on them at school. |
| Problematics | A term created for the purpose of the study that describes a group of males from the bottom academic groups in KS4. So-called because of their general disengagement from education, |

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| | negative attitude to most aspects of school, and unwillingness to participate in a range of activities in both general lessons as well as PE. These lads were predominantly embarking on introductory and vocational qualifications involving time spent at the local FE college. |
| Physical Activity | Any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that requires energy expenditure. |
| Physical Capital | This relates not only to the skills and physical attributes that a person possesses, but also considers the ways in which an individual is able/willing to develop and improve their body, physical capabilities, and skills (Hill, 2013). The production, possession, and value of physical capital are influenced by its recognition within a/the social field (Shilling, 1993) such as the extent to which an ability to fight or lift heavy weights is viewed and valued across different social groups. The possession of physical capital can also be converted into other forms of capital (e.g. economic capital) as a result of utilizing physical strength as a means to gain employment as a manual laborer or pursuing a career in professional sport. |
| Pupil Premium | Additional funding for publicly funded schools in England to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils of all abilities. Aimed at closing the gaps between them and their peers. Pupil premium funding is available to schools maintained by the local authority. |
| Recreation | An activity done for enjoyment or self-development when one is not working. |
| Sink School | A school that has become less attractive and marketable to potential pupils and parents as a result of low examination pass rates, 'poor' Ofsted ratings, and/or a long-term reputation for academic 'failure'. Such schools also often become undersubscribed meaning that they are more likely to have to accept transient pupils such as travellers, immigrants, and those permanently excluded from local schools. |
| Social Capital | Although less clearly defined than a concept such as economic capital, this refers specifically to a person's 'investment' in social relationships with other people. Also the way in which people can draw upon these social ties with other people, often for their own gain (e.g. childcare, club membership, university places) (Bourdieu, 1972, 1973, 1984). |
| Social Field | A site in which the boundaries and internal social structures of that context are defined by sets of rules, guidelines, expectations and |

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| | values (Hay, 2005). Some of these are overt, such as school rules or laws, while others are less overt 'but no less powerful [in their] influences' (Hay & MacDonald, 2010: 4). For example, what is deemed 'acceptable' within a community/family/social class group. |
| Sporting Repertoire | The range of sports and physical activity in which a person is (or has been) regularly involved over a prolonged period with a degree of commitment. Wide and secure sporting repertoires (usually defined as three or more activities undertaken regularly) have been shown to increase the likelihood of a person remaining physically active through their life (Jakobsson, Lundvall, Redelius & Engström, 2012; Roberts & Brodie, 1992; Roberts, 2014). |
| Symbolic Capital | The ways in which others view and value other people's types and levels of economic, social, and cultural capital as being socially valuable or legitimate (Bourdieu, 1989, 1986). Something that cannot always be earned on an individual basis and may fluctuate widely between members in a community (Bourdieu, 1984). |
| Symbolic Violence | A process that can cause working-class children to internalize failures at school as having been caused by their own shortcomings' (Reed-Danahay, 2005: 49). Certain 'doxas' (regimes of truth) cause them to accept that certain options and achievements will not be open to them (e.g. university) or even that they are just 'not cut out for school' (Webb et al., 2005). |

Chapter 1: Introduction

This thesis examines the social background and lifestyles of a group of white, working-class males ('lads') in order to understand the extent to which they were able and willing to negotiate the content and delivery of their PE lessons. In doing so, consideration was given to how the lads spent their leisure time, their attitudes towards school and education, and the wider influences of their friends and family in order to explore how they came to influence their experiences of PE at school. By extension, the study also examined how the lads' attitudes and actions came to impact on the ways that the PE staff structured and delivered the PE curriculum.

In order to explore these issues, a case-study design was utilised in order to focus specifically upon a 'typical' white, working-class secondary school (Ayrefield Community School (ACS))¹ situated in a socially deprived area of Yorkshire that had experienced high levels of deindustrialisation over the last 30 years.

In the first instance, this chapter provides a background to the study before outlining the structure and content of the main chapters.

Social Class in Britain

Despite the fact that class has always been among sociology's strongest unifying concepts (Roberts, 2011), the importance and validity of class in explaining social processes and phenomena has been brought into question in recent years (Beck, 1992; Kingston, 2000; Pahl, 1989; Pakulski & Waters, 1996; Savage, 2000). Successive British governments since the 1980s have claimed that Britain had become a much more meritocratic, individualised, and even 'classless' society (Cannadine, 2000; Gillies, 2005; Reay, 2012). However, despite the fact that the concept of class may appear to carry less explanatory

¹ Both Ayrefield and Ayrefield Community School (ACS) are pseudonyms used to protect the actual name and identity of the secondary school and local community used in the study.

value than it once did (Cannadine, 2000) there is a great deal of evidence that social class continues to permeate British life. Whilst the terminology used may well have moved away from the more traditional conceptualisation of class towards concepts of social exclusion (Gillies, 2005), meritocratic individualisation (Reay, 2012) and 'chavs' (Jones, 2011), it is clear that social class is far from a redundant concept (Roberts, 2011; Scott, 2006).

Despite the apparent continued significance of social class in 21st century Britain, it is clear that the lines between easily identifiable social class groups have become blurred in recent years. Recent evidence suggests that whilst 'traditional' class groups do still exist, the concept of 'working-class' appears to be 'diminishing in importance' (Savage et al., 2013: 27). In addition, research suggests that this social group has become increasingly divided and fragmented (Pahl, 1985; Savage et al., 2013) containing larger and diverse pools of social identities' (Scott, 2006: 55), particularly when compared to the working-class of previous generations.

Partly as a result of the increasing complexity of the British social class structure, and the 'diversification' of the working-class, the identification and accurate naming of distinct social groups in modern British society has become much more difficult over the past 50 years or so. It is perhaps inevitable, therefore, that questions regarding the most accurate ways to classify and measure social class remain (Abbott & Sapsford, 1987; Crompton, 1998; Goldthorpe, 1983; Scott, 1994; Stanworth, 1984), with many official and unofficial classification schemes being proposed over the course of recent decades (Scott, 2006). The first of these was the Registrar General classification scheme that emerged in the early part of the 20th century following the 1911 Census (Platt, 2011). Despite some claims regarding its theoretical justification (Roberts, 2011), many sociologists were happy to use the scheme until the National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification (NS-SEC) replaced it in 1988. The NS-SEC was devised in an attempt to move closer to a more precise and adequate social class map (Scott, 2006) and remains the official government,

and most widely used and accepted, class scheme (Roberts, 2011; Savage et al., 2013). With employment relations and individual workers' levels of autonomy and responsibility central, the scheme consists of eight levels (1 – 8) with NS-SEC group 1 being split in two (1.1 Employers and 1.2 Higher professionals). These eight levels can be collapsed into three broader classes, including a service-class (groups 1 and 2), an intermediate class (groups 3, 4, and 5), and a working-class (groups 6 and 7). Group 8 is made up of the 'never worked and long-term unemployed'. More specifically, classes 1 and 2 (middle-class) are composed of managers and professionals whose jobs are characterised by high and secure incomes, progressive careers, and high levels of autonomy (Roberts, 2011). The NS-SEC scheme also refers to an 'intermediate class' consisting of an ambiguous group including lower level office workers and small employers (petit bourgeois) (groups 3, 4, and 5). Whilst individuals with their jobs classified in these groups are set above manual occupations and in many cases do have some middle-class features (e.g. short career ladders), they remain inferior in all aspects to occupations that are in the middle-class proper (Roberts, 2011). This is due, in part, to the significant variations in their rate and level of income. The third main NS-SEC group is the working-class who are sub-divided into skill levels of semi-routine (class 6; e.g. shop assistants) and class 7 routine (class 7; e.g. cleaners). Individuals classified in these occupations are the polar opposites of the middle-class. Their jobs are generally less secure due to the fact that they are generally paid by the hour or by what they produce, and they are usually paid far less than people in management or professional jobs to whom they are expected to submit to authority (Roberts, 2011).

The most recent attempts to develop a more 'rounded' classification scheme emerged from the BBC's Great British Class Survey and led to the generation of seven 'new' social class groups (elite, established middle-class, technical middle-class, new affluent workers, emergent service workers and precariat). This scheme was based on the

possession of social, economic, and cultural capital and led to the identification of a social elite with larger disposal incomes, and more 'highbrow' interests (opera, sailing). In contrast, a group at the bottom of the social scale also emerged (precariat²) that are seen as being more synonymous with low-level income/benefits and less cultured social pursuits (greyhound racing, bingo).

What is social class?

Despite the continued attempts to accurately classify social class groups in Britain, the labels surrounding class and the levels of class-consciousness are far less clear and significant than in previous generations (Cannadine, 2000; Roberts, 2011; Savage, 2000). However, class, in one way or another, continues to form one of the core concepts of sociology and sociological research (Devine, 2004; Evans, 2007; Savage, 2015; Vincent & Ball, 2006) as well as British society more generally.

Whilst there is no consensus regarding a standard definition of social class, for most sociologists class has an economic foundation and as a result people are invariably classed, at least partly, on the basis of their occupation (Roberts, 2009, 2011). Occupation is important in an economic sense. However, when viewed more broadly, the social impact of a person's occupation often goes far beyond purely financial issues, towards the level of authority and autonomy they enjoy at work, the levels of personal and social prestige that people often feel as a direct result of their occupation, and the ways that they are subsequently viewed by others (Scott, 2006). It is also important to highlight the fact that the resultant time spent with co-workers (who are usually of a similar background) often leads to people being more likely to generate and develop similar outlooks, attitudes, and levels of awareness regarding class (Roberts, 2009, 2011).

² The precariat is a social group formed by people who lack predictability or security in their employment such as those with zero hour contracts. This has been shown to negatively impact on both material and psychological welfare.

Therefore, whilst work-related class identity has become more difficult and complex following the 'deindustrialisation' of the 1980s (Roberts, 2011), occupation (or lack of this in some cases) can influence selection of friends, partners, careers, and places to live (Payne, 2006) subsequently promoting and/or cementing a person's social class grouping in the process. As a result, there appears little doubt that in the present, just as in the past, a person's social class position still remains strongly influenced by their occupation (Roberts, 2006).

Nonetheless, despite the continued prominence of occupation as a measure of class, it is important to note that modern day definitions have almost inevitably become more nuanced (Reay, 2006), with additional factors including locality and tenure (Vincent & Ball, 2006; Walkerdine, Lucey & Melody, 2001) and 'relational' attributes (Ball, Vincent, Kemp & Pietikainen, 2004). In this regard, it is apparent that social class continues to impact on diverse aspects of our lives that range from our levels of health and education (Dorling, 2011; Roberts, 2011) through to what we wear, eat, read, (Walkerdine et al., 2001) and even the sense of pride or contempt we feel in relation to our (and others people's) social class (Hebson, 2009; Lawler, 2005). Therefore, whilst the contemporary concept of social class continues to be something that goes beyond the relatively simple economic and social implications of employment, social class in Britain continues to be something that is 'marked (and) written on our bodies' (Walkerdine et al., 2001: 145) in the form of what sociologists would call physical habitus.

The context for the study

Despite media reports to the contrary, participation levels in sport (defined broadly to incorporate physical recreation) grew between the 1960s and 1980s in the UK among both adults and young people generally (ONS, 1999; Roberts, 1995, 1996; SCW, 2003; Sport England, 2013) with more young people and adults taking part in sport than ever before

(Green, 2012; Wheeler & Green, 2014). Thus, current participation rates are well above the mythical 'golden age' of the 1950s and 1960s (Roberts, 1996) as 'physical activities and sports [continue to] belong to the most popular [leisure] activities' (Telama, Naul, Nupponen, Rychtecky, & Vuolle, 2002: 140) for school-age children and young people in particular (see, e.g. Breedveld, 2003; De Knop & De Martelaer, 2001; Sport England, 2003; Scheerder, Taks, Vanreusel, & Renson, 2005a).

However, whilst it is important to highlight that all social class groups have experienced increased levels of participation generally, studies over several decades (Birchwood, Roberts & Pollock, 2008; Fox & Rickards, 2004; Roberts & Brodie, 1992; Smith, 2006; Time Use Survey, 2000, 2005; Van Tuyckom & Scheerder, 2010), demonstrate that not all groups have experienced the same increases. For adults especially, sports participation rates and trends are still positively correlated to social class, despite the overall opportunity to participate becoming more egalitarian (Scheerder et al., 2005a). It is clear, therefore, that sports participation remains a 'site of symbolic struggle' (Van Tuyckom & Scheerder, 2010), with adults from the higher social classes living in the EU being three times more likely to take part in sport than people from the bottom of the social scale (Scheerder, Vanreusel, & Taks, 2005b). Indeed, recent evidence suggests that general participation rates are currently decreasing among those from the lower social class groups (Sport England, 2015). In addition, rates and patterns of participation remain socially stratified in terms of the types of sports and activities people from different social class groups engage in (Bourdieu, 1978, 1979, 1991; Scheerder et al 2005b; Sport England, 2015).

Whilst these anomalies regarding social class and levels of sports participation appear less pronounced among young people, differences therein become more apparent in terms of the types of activities in which they are involved, as well as the manner in which they take part (Roberts, 1996). Adolescents from lower socio-economic groups are not only

more likely to participate in a more recreational manner, but they are more likely to be actively involved in a much narrower range of sports (Dagkas & Stathi, 2007; Green, Smith & Roberts, 2005) than their middle-class peers. This becomes particularly significant in light of the evidence that secure sporting foundations in the form of so-called wide sporting repertoires (three or more activities undertaken regularly) are much more likely to lead to prolonged involvement and participation in adulthood than simply one's general involvement in sport per se (Jakobsson, Lundvall, Redelius & Engström, 2012; Roberts & Brodie, 1992; Roberts, 2014).

One of the reasons behind the narrow sporting repertoires of young people from working-class backgrounds seems to relate closely to the amount and range of sport/PA opportunities that they experience during their upbringing compared with children from higher socio-economic status families (Quarmby, Dagkas, & Bridge, 2011). This appears to be largely a consequence of the ways in which middle class parents 'invest' in the physical development and sporting repertoires of their children (Evans & Bairner, 2013; Wheeler, 2014; Wheeler & Green, 2014). Ultimately, therefore, the increasingly proactive investment of time, money, and energy in to the physical development of their offspring (Ball, 2009; Chambers, 2012; Evans, 2004, Evans & Davies, 2006; Evans & Bairner, 2013, Levine-Rasky, 2009; Wheeler & Green, 2014; Wheeler, 2014) leads to middle-class children being more likely to develop positive attitudes and broader interests across a range of sports and activities (Evans & Davies, 2010; Trudeau & Shephard, 2008). This then comes to impact positively on the sporting repertoires and sports participation of many middle-class children.

The role of PE in addressing social class differences

Some authors suggest that social class has only held a shadowy presence in educational research and discourse around policy and practice in PE (Evans & Davies, 2006, 2008). However, many highlight the supposed and potential role of PE in increasing the participation and interest of all young people across a broader range of sport and leisure pursuits (Coalter, 2004; Evans & Davies, 2010; Green, 2000, 2012; Trudeau & Shepard, 2008). Nonetheless, despite claims of 'success' in relation to the ability of PE as a subject to broaden skills and sporting repertoires in order to facilitate lifelong active involvement (see, for example Bailey, 2006; Bailey & Dismore, 2004; Talbot, 2001), there is little compelling evidence to suggest that any increases in youth (and adult) sports participation is the result of PE policy and practice (Gard, 2009; Green, 2014; Kirk, 2002; Trudeau & Shepard, 2008;). In fact, there has been little evidence that PE has been able to promote and increase 'life-long participation' (Kirk, 2002) and there remains a dearth of evidence that sufficiently demonstrates the supposedly crucial role that PE is assumed to play in promoting active engagement in sport (Green, 2014). Whilst studies do demonstrate an ability to link young people's participation in certain sports with their subsequent participation choices in adulthood (Perkins, Jacobs, Barber & Eccles, 2004), it remains to be shown that 'PE, in itself, has any, let alone a significant, role to play' in future participation (Green, 2014: 2) with little or no evidence currently able to support any claims that 'normal PE' (Gard, 2009) has had an 'impact on levels of physical activity in the short-term, let alone medium and long-term' (Green, 2014: 2). More alarmingly for PE practitioners and policy-makers, however, are the claims that 'contemporary PE flatters to deceive' (Evans & Davies, 2008: 201), in the sense that many children from lower social groups in particular are failing to get the type of education in the subject of PE that they are entitled to. In short, it seems that when set against goals to increase involvement in sport and lifelong participation for all social class groups, PE (and the various policies surrounding it) may not only be unsuccessful, but may well be perpetuating the existing social differences

(Dagkas, 2011; Wright & O'Flynn, 2006). This is because the subject 'fails to have the desired effect of altering social patterns and inequalities and the predispositions for sport amongst individuals and populations once they leave school' (Evans & Davies, 2010: 768-69). In relation to schools within socially deprived areas more specifically, research suggests that PE and school sport provision is at best problematic (Kirk, 2005). Indeed, some even suggest that most current PE programmes are consistently less than effective in promoting participation across a wide range of sports and activities for school pupils from deprived backgrounds (Dagkas & Stathi, 2007).

Aims and context of the study

Against this backdrop, the main aim of the present study was to explore the ways in which the working-class backgrounds of the lads at ACS came to influence their attitudes to, and participation in, PE at school. In doing so, consideration was also given to the more wide-ranging influences on the lads' approaches to PE; namely their leisure lifestyles, attitudes towards school and education, and their relationships with both staff and each other. It was evident that the class-related leisure preferences of young-people (Abercrombie & Ward, 2000; Bourdieu, 1984; Critcher, 2006; Crossley, 2001; Engstrom, 2008; Green, 2010; Reid, 1998; Roberts, 2006, 2012; Roberts & Brodie, 1992; Wilson, 2002), and the strong relationship between social class and educational attainment and engagement (Archer & Yamashita 2003; Ball, 2010, 2011; Blanden & Gibbons, 2006; Carbonaro, 2005; Dunne & Gazeley, 2008; Feinstein, 2003, 2004; Hirsch, 2006; Kelly, 2008, 2009; Marks, 2000; Palmer, MacInnes & Kenway, 2006; Reay, 2004c), would need to be considered in order to accurately make sense of the lads' PE experiences.

By focusing on a large cohort of working-class lads within one mainstream secondary school (ACS) situated within a socially deprived area (Ayrefield), therefore, the study set out to gain a greater understanding of how the peers, friends, family, and general

social background of the lads may have come to influence their attitudes and behaviours towards PE, what they chose to do in their spare time, and their schooling and education more generally. Overall then, the lads directly or indirectly involved in the study were considered in the context of their wider lives as well as the long-term history of the surrounding area and its strong working-class traditions and culture.

In order to achieve this, a case-study approach was utilised which involved the observation of over 60 different PE lessons of predominantly KS4 pupils, and around 12 classroom-based, non-PE lessons over a non-continuous 24-day period. During this process, both staff and lads were engaged in guided conversations (either during or following the observation of lessons) in an attempt to gain a greater understanding of what had been observed or heard. A total of nine focus groups involving a total of 58 KS4 male pupils (lads) were also conducted at various stages in the study, with one focus group also completed that involved all four male PE staff employed at the school.

During the course of the data collection and the process of data analysis, three distinct groups of lads emerged and were subsequently termed the 'Performer', 'Participants' and 'Problematic' groups. Further details on how these groups emerged are provided in the methods chapter. Reference is made to these groups throughout the findings and discussion chapters regarding the similarities and differences between these three groups of lads in relation to their leisure interests, attainment and engagement at school, attitudes towards their future lives, and levels and types of participation in PE. The discussion chapter is structured in a way that attempts to place in context the main findings of the study with relevant literature, before attempting to explain these outcomes in relation to the work of Norbert Elias and Pierre Bourdieu.

Structure and content of the thesis

This thesis is divided into seven distinct chapters. Following on from the introduction the literature review is broken down into three sections that address the pertinent issues relating

to (i) working-class communities (ii) the impact of social class on educational attainment and engagement, and (iii) the ways in which social background impacts upon youngsters' PE/school sport experiences and attitudes, as well as their leisure profiles.

The third chapter outlines the theoretical framework for the study, namely the work of, and similarities between, Norbert Elias' figurational sociology and Pierre Bourdieu.

Chapter four provides a detailed discussion of the chosen research design and a justification for the methods used. There is also a detailed overview of the school, its pupils and the surrounding area in this chapter, as well as more detailed information regarding the three groups of lads that emerged as part of the study.

Chapter five includes all the main findings of the study relating to the lads' attitudes towards, and engagement in PE. It also addresses their leisure profiles, educational engagement/success, and the influence of friends, peers and parents on all of these issues. This is then followed by a discussion chapter (six) that examines these main findings in relation to relevant literature and sociological theory. The final chapter is the conclusion.

It is hoped that this thesis contributes to the existing knowledge base regarding how the working-class backgrounds of secondary school male pupils comes to impact on their leisure profiles, their engagement and attainment at school/education, and subsequently how they then come to influence and experience PE at school.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The British working-class and working-class communities

The emergence and development of the British working-class

Historical and academic literature has consistently stated that the British working-class initially emerged as a strong and unified group as a result of the discipline and common experience of industrialisation (Cannadine, 2000; Scott, 2006). The commonality and nature of working-class employment in these manual environments at the time has also been shown to have led to a sense of collective identity, a strong sense of class consciousness, and the emergence of mutually reinforcing, tight-knit communities dependent on manual work (Roberts, 2011; Scott 2006). In relation to this, some authors suggest that these early working-class communities became increasingly characterised by distinctive cultural values and practices of masculinity, physical labour, and pride, which stood outside those of the middle and upper-classes until the 1970s (Savage, Bagnall & Longhurst, 2005).

However, in recent decades, various studies have highlighted a rapid decline in the main industries traditionally associated with working-class life and occupations (such as mining, steel production and ship-building) with evidence that this has led to a significant move away from heavy industry as a source of employment, towards a post-industrial service-based society (Hollands, 1995; MacDonald, 2008; Nayak, 2006; O'Donnell & Sharp, 2000; Roberts, 2011; Robinson, 1988; Shildrick, Blackman & Macdonald, 2009). The significant level of deindustrialisation seen in Britain since the early 1980s has subsequently led to many British working-class adults being employed in service-related occupations that are synonymous with low-pay, high levels of casualization (Felstead & Jewson, 1999; Green & Owen, 2006; MacDonald, 2008; McDowell, 2001; McKnight, 2002; Roberts, 2011) and a reliance on finance and retail related employment (Castells, 2000a, 2000b; Webster, Simpson, MacDonald, Abbas, Cieslik, Shildrick, Simpson, 2004; Wilson, 1996). Therefore, whilst Charlesworth (2000) suggests that the working-class may

structurally still exist, Scott (2006: 243) claims that changes to the British economy over the last 30 years, have meant that, 'the collective identity of manual workers...is no longer consolidated by status conceptions rooted in factory production and cohesive communal relations', as it may have been in the past. In short, there is evidence that manual workers in Britain no longer 'live' class in the same way, as a result of the ever-changing nature of the work, wage levels, job security, and responsibility (Roberts, 2011; Scott, 2006).

Studies focusing upon young working-class males in particular also suggest that the decline of employment in traditional industry has not only prevented this group from sustaining masculine, working-class identities, but forced many into 'new' types of service-related work (call centres) that are often viewed as feminine and antithetical to traditional working-class values (McDowell, 2001; Nayak, 2006; Roberts, 2011; Sennett, 1999; Webster et al., 2004). For many young working-class men, therefore, the transition into 'manhood' - which was once inextricably linked to the movement from school to work, and the notions of stability, masculinity, and physical 'hardness' - have now been almost totally lost (Bates, 1984; Hollands, 1990; McDowell, 2001; Nayak, 2006; Willis, 1977). Indeed, some suggest that many young working-class males are now more likely to be 'learning to serve' rather than 'learning to labour'³ (McDowell, 2000) due to the levels of deindustrialisation evident in most working-class areas (Roberts, 2011; McDowell, 2003).

The 'modern' British working-class

Despite the significant changes to working-class employment in Britain highlighted above, many authors suggest that a strong collective identity and lifestyle still remains in many

³ The term 'learning to labour' is taken from Willis' study of the same name in which groups of working-class 'lads' were observed and examined both in school and within their working-class lives, communities and schools during the late 1970s. Aspects of Willis's study served as an initial background for the study, not least the title of the thesis.

working-class communities (Johnston et al., 2000; MacDonald & Marsh, 2005; MacDonald et al., 2005). Indeed, it has been suggested that for large groups of people living in close proximity to one another, the local neighbourhood continues to matter (MacDonald & Shildrick 2007; Watt & Stenson, 1998).

However, it does seem that due to the changing nature of employment in Britain, the high degree of commonality that previously existed among this social group (Roberts, 2011; Scott, 2006) may now have been eroded, particularly when compared to previous generations. Whilst relatively clear fractures within the British working-class have been evident since the 1960s (Roberts, 2011) there is evidence to suggest that a degree of polarisation and social fragmentation currently exists among this social class group in a way that it has never done before. Whilst intangible differences have arguably always existed even in the most cohesive of working-class communities, research suggests that 'rough', 'respectable', and even so called 'no-go' areas have become increasingly common and recognisable in many working-class areas (Crow & Maclean, 2006; MacDonald & Marsh, 2005; Murie, 1998; Johnston et al., 2000). In many cases, this split within many working-class communities has been perpetuated by 'rougher' families becoming concentrated in certain areas by council housing associations (Foster, 2000; Lupton & Power 2002) as well as distinctions being made between those who are seen to be 'working hard' and those seen to be 'playing the system' in order to avoid work (Batty, Cole & Green, 2011; Batty & Flint, 2010; Crisp & Robinson, 2010). Indeed, some have even described the emergence of an 'underclass' (Macnicol, 1987; Morris, 1994; Robinson & Gregson, 1992; Smith, 1992; Westergaard, 1992) that is said to be characterised by 'work-shy', anti-social, quasi-criminal individuals (MacDonald, 1997) although there is little evidence to support the existence of such a distinct group of people ('underclass') who are totally dislocated from the world of 'respectable', hard-working families' (Bagguley & Mann, 1992; Batty, Cole & Green, 2011; Batty & Flint, 2010; Crisp & Robinson, 2010; Dean, 1991;

Holman, 1994/95; MacDonald, 1997; MacDonald & Marsh, 2001; MacNicol, 1987; Morris, 1994, 1995; Smith, 1992).

Overall, therefore, whilst it seems clear that many working-class communities still exist in Britain, it is also apparent that there are some groups of people living in these areas that are deemed to be more 'segregated [and] socially isolated' (Batty et al., 2011:12) resulting in them becoming increasingly separated from others within their community (Dorling & Thomas, 2004; Dorling et al., 2007; Dorling, 2011; Lee & Hills, 1998; Lupton & Power, 2002; MacDonald & Marsh, 2005; Power, 1998). As a result, research suggests that among large sections of Britain that are experiencing the multiple problems associated with high levels of unemployment, low income, poor housing and bad health (Byrne, 1999; Hills, Le Grand, & Piachaud, 2002; Webster et al., 2004) there are 'rough' and 'respectable' groups/areas/families that can be identified. In particular, these divisions are more likely to exist in those areas that have experienced mass deindustrialisation (Butler & Watt, 2007) (such as Ayrefield).

Working-class communities

It seems evident that working-class areas and communities still exist in Britain and are generally characterised by low levels of home ownership, low economic activity, employment in mundane and routine occupations, and problems associated with ill-health (physical and mental) (Macintyre, Maclver & Sooman, 2002; Mitchell, Shaw & Dorling, 2000; Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit, 2002; Ward, Fagin, McDowell, Perrons & Raye, 2007; Webster et al., 2004). Despite the plethora of social problems associated with such communities, however, studies suggest that many working-class residents 'choose' to remain living in these areas for generations (Batty, et al., 2011; Burrows & Rhodes, 1998; Johnston et al., 2000; McDonald & Marsh, 2005; McDowell, 2001; Webster et al., 2004) as they often find it difficult to perceive the inequalities that they are experiencing (Batty et al.,

2011; MacDonald & Marsh, 2005). A common reason for many working-class residents choosing to remain in their local communities has been linked to the strong sense of personal attachment that they often feel to where they live (MacDonald, 2008; Savage et al., 2005). This is not only accentuated by the opportunity to regularly interact with members of the community with whom they share common backgrounds, lifestyles, and cultural affiliations (Livingston, Bailey & Kearns, 2008), but also by the presence of a high proportion of their friends and relatives (Giuliani, 2003; Livingston et al., 2008). It has also been acknowledged that many residents of working-communities remain bound to an area due to the value placed on the financial and emotional 'resources' provided by friends and family (Afridi, 2011; Batty et al., 2011; Cattell, 2001; Macdonald & Marsh, 2005; Webster et al., 2004: 36). Studies have found that the centrality of the family in working-class communities is often very much evident in providing varying forms of family support (such as childcare) and social interaction that is often not possible in the more 'dispersed' families of other social class groups (Butler & Robson, 2003, Cole & Green, 2010; Crisp & Robinson, 2010; Savage et al., 2005; Webster et al., 2004). For younger working-class families in particular, studies have also shown that regular and intermittent help with childcare emerges as an extremely important form of support provided by family members (Batty et al., 2011), and grandparents especially (Dench & Ogg, 2002; Wheelock & Jones, 2002), especially as women's participation rates in the labour market continue to increase (Ward et al., 2007). For young working-class men in particular, the perceived benefits provided in the search for work (Johnston et al., 2000; MacDonald et al., 2005; McDowell, 2001; Morris, 1995) is another reason why many are much more inclined to remain residents in, and strongly attached to, their local communities (MacDonald et al., 2005) as friends, neighbours, and family members help secure jobs via 'word of mouth' or a 'good word' (Johnston et al., 2000; McDowell, 2001).

Male residents in working-class communities

For male residents, studies in working-class communities have found that despite the 'feminizing' impact of mass-deindustrialisation, many working-class males still aspire to, and value, 'traditional' working-class traits and attitudes such as physicality, aggression and 'manliness' (Campbell, 1993; Dunning et al., 2004; Hobbs, 1994; McDowell, 2001). Therefore, whilst several studies have stated that many working-class males can no longer be 'real' in the true occupational sense of the word (Nayak, 2006), in many communities towards the bottom of the social scale, white working-class identity is being refashioned. This has been shown to come via their involvement in, and even greater valuing of, alternative 'masculine' activities and behaviours such as 'circuit drinking', 'lads' holidays, sexual conquests and, in younger males, swearing, physical aggression/violence or 'hanging about' on street corners (Hollands, 1995; MacDonald & Marsh, 2001; McDowell, 2002; Nayak, 2006). As the opportunity to demonstrate the more traditional working-class traits through employment has become more difficult in recent years, there is also some evidence to suggest that the regular production, reproduction and valuing of overt aggressive masculinity and the valuing of being seen as 'hard' young man (Campbell, 1993; Dunning et al., 2004; Hobbs, 1994; McDowell, 2001) has become more important to young working-class males than ever before. Studies also suggest that physical aggression and the ability to 'handle oneself' is also just as important to young working-class males (Dunning et al., 2004) as they respond to the 'crisis of masculinity' (Roberts, 2011; McDowell, 2003) brought about by wider changes in society and employment trends.

The reason for this seems to relate to the continuation of 'traditional' masculine values in many working-class communities such open aggression in families/ communities, the relative freedom of children from adult control, the prevalence of street-based socialisation, and the patriarchal dominance of most family relationships (Dunning et al., 2004; Nayak, 2006; MacDonald & Marsh, 2001, 2005). It has also been suggested that the

importance of 'their' area in the formation and development of their working-class identity, self-worth, and masculine reputations (Livingston et al., 2008; Webster et al., 2004) can also lead many young, male residents to lack any desire to leave their local area in either the short or long-term (Dunning et al., 2004; Kearns & Parkinson, 2002). This has been shown to be particularly relevant where the 'possession' of a personal or family 'reputation' is seen as beneficial to an individual or family as a way of enhancing social identity and/or status within their local area (Clark & Uzzel, 2002; Johnson et al., 2000; Livingston et al., 2008; MacDonald & Marsh, 2005).

This section of the literature review has sought to provide an overview of the literature relating to the ways in which the British working-class has changed and fragmented as a result of wider social influences whilst also acknowledging the commonalities that still appear to exist among this particular social class group. The next section will address the ways in which social class background influences the levels of attainment and engagement of pupils from different backgrounds.

Social Class and Education

(Under) achievement of working-class pupils in Britain

The British education system has long been characterised by a history of working-class underachievement that has proved difficult to eradicate (Dunne & Gazeley, 2008) with white British pupils from working-class homes consistently shown to be the lowest attainers

at school (Babb, 2005; Demie & Lewis, 2011; Dunne & Gazeley, 2008). Pupils in the highest social class groups remain almost twice as likely to achieve five or more A*–C grades at GCSE than those whose parents classified as part of the manual working-classes (NS-SEC 6 and 7) (Demie & Lewis, 2011). When the academic achievements of working-class pupils are broken down further, studies also show that the attainment of those pupils entitled to free school meals (FSM) (a widely accepted indicator of levels of student family poverty) emerges as strong inverse predictor of GCSE performance (Fitz, Davies & Evans, 2006), with white, British boys on FSM consistently demonstrating the lowest overall academic attainment of any other distinct social group.

However, it seems far too simplistic to attribute working-class under-achievement to economic influences alone. Whilst there does appear to be a cycle of white, working-class underachievement at school, studies demonstrate that these concerns can also be extended to low academic expectation, erratic levels of school engagement, an increased likelihood of self-exclusion, and a greater reliance on vocational qualifications (Attwood, Croll & Hamilton, 2004; Demie & Lewis, 2011; Harris & Eden, 2000; Munn & Lloyd, 2005; Osler & Vincent, 2003). Therefore, although some claim that the low attainment and high levels of working-class disengagement from education should be ‘attributed to a largely disaffected working-class youth in Britain who are unable or unwilling to participate in the mainstream of education’ (Steer, 2000: 1) and often reject the values and cultures of dominant institutions such as schools (Ferguson, 2004; McKendrick, Scott & Sinclair, 2007), it seems more likely that working-class pupils are influenced by a range of complex and long-term social relationships within their lives. In relation to this, therefore, an examination of the relationships and processes relating to socialisation, capital, and habitus may allow us to gain a greater understanding of working-class trends in relation to school achievement and engagement.

Working-class pupils' academic attainment and experiences of education

Initially, it appears that an individual's background has been shown by some to restrict 'alternative' attitudes and behaviours, particularly if they are at odds with the norms within one's community (Archer, Hollingworth & Halsall, 2007; Ingram, 2009; MacDonald & Marsh, 2005; Reay, 2004b). Some authors have also found that the specific attitudes and actions synonymous with a working-class background may be limiting the academic attainment and engagement of many white working-class pupils (Ball et al., 2000; Carter-Wall & Whitfield, 2012; Feinstein, 2003, 2004; Hollway & Jefferson, 2000; Lucey, Melody & Walkerdine, 2003). It has also been suggested by some that the parents, families, and friends of many working-class pupils may hold anti-school attitudes and/or have experienced low academic achievement at school (Lucey & Walkerdine, 2000) which contrasts with their middle-class peers who are often taught to view and approach educational engagement and success in a more positive manner (Archer et al., 2007; Gutman & Eccles, 1999; Jodl, Michael, Malanchuk, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2001; Mortimer & Kumka, 1982).

Overall, therefore, we cannot understand the long term patterns of working-class pupils' relative disengagement and under-achievement at school, without acknowledging the fact that their social background can lead to a set of 'values and practices that (stand) against the ethos and expected behaviours of formal education' (MacDonald & Marsh, 2005: 67). It is to a more detailed examination of these issues that this chapter will now turn.

The influence of parents and significant adults on working-class pupils' engagement with formal education

Parental involvement has been shown to have a significant impact on a child's education (Demie & Lewis, 2011; Evans, 2007), general study habits, attendance at school, and homework tasks (Epstein, Kehily, Mac An Ghaill, & 2001; Hanson, McLanahan &

Thompson, 1997; Lareau, 2000; Muller, 1995). In fact, due to working-class parents being less likely to be well-educated themselves, studies have shown that they are subsequently less inclined to create a home environment that optimises success at school (Evans, 2007) and more likely to accept their children's underachievement and/or inappropriate behaviour (Demie & Lewis, 2011). While there appears to be no direct claims that working-class parents do not value education per se, several studies do suggest that working-class parents are much less likely to 'push' their children academically (Lucey & Walkerdine, 2000; Reay & Ball, 1998), preferring to prioritise the need to provide for the physical needs of their children (clothing, food, and housing) (Lareau, 2003) over more 'formal' skills, such as language development (Bodovski, 2010). Consequently, working-class parents have been shown to rely more heavily on the school (and its teachers) for teaching and developing the skills that are more beneficial for formal learning. This can then mean that many working-class children simply find themselves less prepared for the formal learning environments that are common in the formal school environment (Evans, 2007).

Education and working-class males

Given the nature of Ayrefield as a strong working-class community, the concept of masculinity – defined as the 'process of becoming and being male' (Gard, 2006: 784) - is particularly important for the lads at ACS, both directly and indirectly. It has been suggested that the understanding of what masculinity should be has changed in many working-class communities - as fathers' roles and attitudes change and evolve and women earn more equal rights in the workplace (Connell, 2008). However, 'being a man' and demonstrating masculine characteristics and behaviors is still an important aspect of working-class life for young males despite the impacts of mass-deindustrialization. This enduring prominence of 'traditional' masculinity in working-class communities evidently then comes to impact on how male pupils view and engage in education. It is worth stating here that a range of studies have consistently demonstrated that schools are host to diverse constructions and

displays of masculinity (Brown, 1998; Connell, 2008; Mac an Ghaill, 1994) and that multiple masculinities operate within any given social context such as that of the school environment (Connell, 1995; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Gard, 2006; Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Parker, 1996). However, the concept of hegemonic masculinity is often used to define the 'culturally exalted', 'idealised' (Connell, 1990: 83), and dominant form of masculinity that exists within a school (Connell, 1995, 2008; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005) that often comes to be viewed and accepted as the norm (Swain, 2010). As an extension, various authors have also stated that those male pupils that demonstrate the characteristics and behaviors linked to this hegemonic masculinity are much more likely to benefit from greater degrees of influence, power, and status and are consequently willing and able to maintain and defend its dominance (Connell, 2008; Swain, 2010).

In relation to working-class schools more specifically, it is important to acknowledge that the hegemonic masculinity emerges through a collective social practice (Tischler & McCaughtry, 2011) that is closely linked to the over-riding view of masculinity that is evident in the wider community (Smith, 2007). Therefore, it is often the case that the hegemonic masculinity in working-class schools is underwritten by physical and dominant actions and abilities that are often associated with the threat of aggression and even violence (Swain, 2010). It is often the case in many working-class schools in particular, therefore, that as certain masculinities emerge as 'normal', all other masculinities become regarded as abnormal or deviant. The dominant/hegemonic masculinity that prevails in a school then subsequently becomes the measure against which boys compare themselves (Tischler & McCaughtry, 2011). Given these issues, therefore, it is perhaps not surprising that the social pressures linked to masculinity in working-class communities can lead to conflict with the 'feminizing' world of formal education for many male pupils (Ball, 1981; Brown, 1998; Hargreaves, 1967; Lacey, 1970; Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Willis, 1977). This can often be attributed to the fact that many working-class males are more likely to develop largely

'masculine' identities that often conflict starkly with the expectations and demands of formal school life (Evans, 2007; O'Donnell & Sharpe, 2000) as a specific pattern of masculinity often holds the dominant position (hegemonic) in most schools (Connell, 1995, 2008; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005) situated in 'strong' working-class areas. By extension, those male pupils that demonstrate the characteristics and behaviours linked to this hegemonic masculinity are much more likely to benefit from greater degrees of authority, power and 'privilege' (Connell, 2008:133).

As a result of the valuing of such masculine traits and actions among male working-class males, such pupils have traditionally come into conflict with teachers, school, and education. This has been shown to be closely linked to the concept of 'masculine honor' which often takes precedence over academic ability and achievements (Connell, 2008, Poynting, Noble, & Tabar, 2003). Ultimately, therefore, the working-class identity that is developed and promoted within traditional, 'masculine' working-class localities, can lead to young people from these backgrounds developing largely negative attitudes of formal schooling due to the conflict between educational engagement and 'masculine' expectations (Archer et al., 2007; Connolly & Neill, 2001; Connolly & Healy, 2004; Healy, 2006; Reay & Lucey, 2000). This outcome is often accentuated during the latter years of mainstream schooling (KS4) as the notion of individual identity and status emerges as a highly important social aspect of adolescence for most young males (Bromnick & Swallow, 1999; Gneri, Smer, & Yildirim, 1999). An additional factor in this identity formation relates to the importance of school as an opportunity for making and seeing friends, passing the time, having fun (O'Donnell & Sharpe, 2000; Ridge, 2002) as well as gaining peer group acceptance and developing social worth (Brown, 1987). Overall, it is very much evident why the informal social relations that exist between all school pupils can come to exert a strong influence on the attitudes, behaviours, and experiences at school for working-class (male) pupils (MacDonald & Marsh, 2005), and why such influences often lead to a

contagion of misbehaviour (Kelly, 2009; MacFarland, 2001). As conforming to behavioural 'norms' expected from their friends and peers within the school environment can often be seen as more important than success in formal examinations by many pupils (MacDonald & Marsh, 2005) - particularly when academic success or engagement stands to lead to effective 'exclusion' from friendship groups (Lawler, 2000; MacDonald & Marsh, 2005) and a subsequent decrease in their 'popularity' amongst peers (Kelly, 2009) – it is perhaps not surprising that going 'against the flow' is rarely seen as an option for many male, working-class pupils (MacDonald & Marsh, 2005).

'Walking the line'

Despite these issues and influences some studies do suggest that many working-class pupils/males can, and often do, flit between school engagement and the social acceptance of their friends and peers. However, evidence has shown that such pupils often encounter very strong 'social pressures', that not only lead to them needing to make some potentially 'brave' decisions at school, but also to some working-class pupils/males consciously feeling a need to 'walk the line' between social acceptance and academic engagement. Unfortunately, some authors suggest that this balance can be seen as virtually impossible for some as it often requires an ability or willingness to relinquish some aspects of their working-class identities (Archer et al., 2007; Ingram, 2011; MacDonald & Marsh, 2005). This is especially the case where male pupils feel the need to create and perpetuate a 'bright but naughty' tag as a defence strategy against being viewed 'unfavourably' by their peers (Lucey & Walkerdine, 2000; Mac an Ghaill, 1994).

'Alternative' forms of success and status for working-class pupils

As many working-class pupils are often socialised towards adopting negative attitudes towards school, and have also been shown to under-achieve academically in relation to their middle-class peers, research has shown that a significant proportion of these pupils

will often look elsewhere for a positive self-image and social status. As academic engagement and/or success can be neither valued nor achievable, research suggests (Archer et al., 2007; Nolan, 2011) that many working-class pupils can create a strong identity for themselves in school. In some cases this takes the form of purposefully disrupting the highly-controlled environment of school by displaying oppositional, disruptive and dismissive behaviour on a regular basis (Archer et al., 2007; Nolan, 2011).

Whilst Kelly (2009) suggests that such attitudes or actions to school may appear totally irrational to many (often school teachers), the pupils' strong desire to gain much valued status amongst peers and friends can often emerge as being extremely important, even though 'such attitudes and actions can emerge as extremely hurtful to the(ir) subsequent chances in school' (Kelly, 2009: 452). In other cases, some pupils who are less inclined to demonstrate such problematic behaviour on a regular basis, may still 'rebel' in more subtle ways by indulging in behaviours that not only conflict with formal school rules, but also provide a means of developing and maintaining some form of self-identity and status, such as the wearing of jewellery, sports wear, and make up (Skeggs, 2004). In this case, there is similar evidence to suggest whilst many working-class pupils are aware that wearing branded goods or make-up at school may well get them in to trouble, the ability for them to develop feelings of value and status by doing so can often outweigh the risk of being caught and reprimanded by teachers (Archer et al., 2007; Kelly, 2009).

School and teacher influences on working-class pupils

In addition to the negative social influence of peers and friends on working-class pupils' engagement with school life, some studies also suggest that teachers' actions and attitudes can come to impact on working-class pupils in a variety of ways. Ingram (2009), for example, suggests that given the educational background and subsequent employment of working-class pupils' parents and family, many teachers can often be seen as 'aliens'

by pupils and parents, whose lives outside of school bear little resemblance to their own (Ingram, 2009). Similar studies have also suggested that this perception of teachers can lead to difficult pupil-teacher and parent-teacher relationships that have been shown to become based on a 'them versus us' attitude, especially when teachers are seen to be over-authoritative (MacDonald & Marsh, 2005; Riseborough, 1993). Subsequently, claims have been made that classroom teachers can often play a significant role in the relative educational 'failure' of working-class children (Ball, 1981; Dunne & Gazeley, 2008; Hargreaves, 1967; Lacey, 1970) with others suggesting that that prior attainment data (e.g. primary school SATs) can often be accepted uncritically by staff when such evidence highlights the actual or potential 'failure' of working-class pupils at school (DfES, 2006; Smith, 2003 cited in Dunne & Gazeley, 2008). The work of Dunne and Gazeley (2008) found evidence that the social background of pupils can often be referred to implicitly by teachers when speaking about their academic achievement, as well as the fact that teachers, in many cases, predicted future lives for their working-class pupils synonymous with unskilled work, unemployment, crime, and early pregnancy.

As a corollary to the specific influence of teachers, there have also been suggestions that schools themselves can often reproduce and project educational social class divisions as a result of some pupils being provided with differing opportunities across a 'mixed' school population (Davies & Evans, 2001; Fitz et al., 2006). In relation to this, studies suggest that pupils in the 'academic' streams are more likely to be made up from pupils from higher up the social scale with these 'higher' pupils also shown to face starkly different opportunities, pressures, and expectations at school compared to working-class pupils (Daniels & Creese, 2004; Fitz et al., 2006; Gillborn & Youdell, 2000; Reay, 2006). By extension, some studies suggest that this can not only lead to stark differences in the quality of teaching between such groups (Boaler, et al., 2000; Dunne & Gazeley, 2008; Harris & Ranson, 2005), but in some cases pupils can be actually prevented from achieving

higher grades on examinations (A*, A and B grades) due to the nature of the exam for which they have been entered (Boaler, 1997). It does seem, therefore, that the set to which pupils are allocated can then subsequently have a significant impact on how well they then do at school (William & Bartholomew, 2004).

School banding

Several seminal studies that have taken place over the last 50 years have concluded that the British education system and structure of schools can accentuate the split between groups of pupils in the same school (Ball, 1981; Hargreaves, 1967; Lacey, 1970; Willis, 1979). The process of 'banding' pupils in to groups based on ability, stands to perpetuate any existing differences between pupils and can lead to them being treated and viewed quite differently (Ball, 1981; Hargreaves, 1967; Lacey, 1970). Indeed for Ball (1981: 39-40), there was evidence to suggest that whilst most pupils appeared conformist and eager when they first entered secondary school, the banding system imposed by the school became the 'personification of a self-fulfilling prophecy'. This was due to that fact that both teachers and pupils came to view their (pupils) future attainment as being mapped out for them, with working-class pupils much more likely to 'percolate downwards' (Ball, 1981: 39-40).

Therefore, as a consequence of the groupings, and often-low expectations placed on many working-class pupils in secondary school, studies also suggest that many can end up being caught in a cycle of disillusionment and low engagement/attainment. This is due to the fact that many working-class pupils can learn to see themselves as 'nothings' within the current British education system (Archer et al., 2007; DfES 2006 cited in Dunne & Gazeley, 2008; Reay & William, 1999). Similar studies have also suggested that such influences can lead to feelings of shame, marginalisation, and self-perceptions of 'stupidity' as a result of them continually being placed in 'bottom sets' (Archer et al., 2007; Reay,

2006). Whilst these feelings of being marginalised and isolated are often internalised, some authors suggests that the increasing surveillance and regulation of pupils' learning through testing and assessment (Beckmann & Cooper, 2005) and the ever-increasing measure of objective 'success' (Dorling, 2005) has further exposed the under-achievement (Reay, 2006) and disengagement of many working-class pupils.

Issues relating to the modern Western education system

There is a great deal evidence that highlights the increasing commodification of British education (Ball, 2003; Ball et al., 2012; Leat, 2014) resulting in words such as standards, targets, progress, predicted grades, underperforming, monitoring, and intervention becoming commonplace in education discourse. As various types of school 'results' (e.g. examinations and pupil attendance) have become increasingly important in league tables, national averages, and comparative benchmarks (Leat, 2014), a performance culture (Ball, 2003; Ball et al., 2012) has come to impact on both staff and pupils as government expectations work 'downwards' to generate expectations of 'delivery' (Ball et al., 2012). Indeed Barber (2007) has coined the term 'the delivery chain' to describe the hierarchies of 'expectation' imposed on 'front line' schools/teachers to deliver the expectations imposed on them by government ministers. In addition, Jones (2003: 160) highlights the 'regulatory system' that establishes strong links between what happens in the classroom (micro) and the 'macro-level objectives of standards and achievements'. Subsequently, authors have suggested that pressures related to standards, progress, and achievement have become enmeshed in normal school life (Watson & Hay, 2003) as schools are now perennially involved in an all consuming need to improve the benchmark level of five or more higher-grade passes and adhere to school inspection frameworks (Gillborn & Youdell, 2000; Leat, 2014) via a process of a 'tyranny of conformity' (Loveday, 2008: 120). It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, that teachers have been shown to be enfolded in to

the performance of their pupils (and school) (Ball et al., 2012) to the extent that teachers working in England have been highlighted as some of the most scrutinised, accountable, and pressured in the world (Ball et al., 2012; Leat et al., Reid, 2012) - not least because 'failure' can lead to reprimands and even dismissal (Leat, 2014).

As a result of these issues highlighted above, many teachers have been forced (often by their own admission) to not only favour 'the competitive interests of the school...rather than individual students' needs or well-being (Ball et al., 2012: 528), but also to conform to school performance expectations by 'teaching to the test' (Alexander et al., 2009). In relation to the latter, studies have shown that lesson and teaching environments are highly hierarchical as the pupil is subservient (Leat et al., 2012) and learning is something that is 'done to you' (Leat et al., 2012; Nystrand et al., 1997). Not only, therefore, does 'the current assessment regime necessitate a certain style of teaching (i.e. transmission) in order to ensure that the right answers are securely known in order to pass exams' (Leat et al., 2012: 145), but 'strategic teaching' and 'strategic learning' have become common as teaching and learning becomes increasingly focused on the 'surface learning' required for passing examinations (Ball et al., 2012). It does appear, however, that the pupils themselves are also increasingly led to feel the need to respond to the range of pressures imposed on them (Leat, 2014), not least because they are currently expected to stay in some form of education or training until the age of 18. Indeed, some studies have highlighted the fact that many students are increasingly driven by a short-term and pragmatic desire to gather 'the correct answers' so that they are then able to 'go and learn them' (Leat, et al., 2012: 408). This has resulted in many pupils becoming reluctant to go away and find their own responses for the fear that they may be wrong and/or waste valuable time in the process (Hockings, 2009).

As further consequence of this, schools have also been shown to develop 'ingenious' means of reaching targets which has included conscious searches for 'easier' exam boards as well as using particular vocational courses that provided four GCSE passes (Leat, 2014). Studies have also found that whilst students who are most likely to impact on school results receive strategic monitoring and support (e.g. C/D borderline students), those likely to succeed anyway are generally left to their own devices. As a consequence, it has also been shown that the irredeemable 'hopeless cases' are often left alone almost completely (Ball et al., 2012) via a process described by Gillbourn and Youdell (2000: 525) as 'educational triage' within the 'A-C economy'.

The increasing polarisation between schools and the emergence of 'sink' schools

Schools with a high proportion of pupils from the bottom of the social scale have been shown to underperform relative to schools with a 'higher' social class intake on a range of measures (e.g. exam results, pupil progress), even when such contrasting schools exist within the same local authority (Fitz et al., 2006). Whilst this relative under-performance of some 'working-class schools' can be objectively quantified by formal measures such as exam results and Ofsted reports, these have also been shown to influence the way in which a school is perceived within the local area. This under-performance and the stigma that is often attached to 'poor' schools has also been shown to lead to a strong degree of polarisation between schools that are often situated in very close proximity to one another (Fitz et al., 2006) – sometimes in the same town.

In relation to this trend, evidence suggests that middle-class parents are more likely to be more proactive in securing places for their children at the 'better' schools in the area (Gerwitz, 2001; Vincent, 2001) and less likely to feel constrained both in terms of mobility and travel when selecting these schools (Harvey, 1985; Massey, 1994; May, 1996; Reay, 2004a). The intention for many middle-class pupils here is that such an approach to school

selection will provide an environment of like-minded peers where the school can build upon their own good 'work' as parents (Ball, 2010; Bodovski, 2010; Reay, 2004a).

Overall, therefore, evidence suggests that this apparent contrast in approaches to school 'selection' between middle and working-class parents leads to the current 'good' schools maintaining (and even improving) their measures of success and subsequent reputations. This is due, in part, to the fact that the majority of pupils in such schools have been shown to be more likely to 'push' and support their children through school (Evans, 2006: 9). Consequently, the status and achievement of such schools remains high and the demand for places (West, Noddem, Pennel & Travers, 2000) increases. In many cases this leads to such schools being able to apply increasingly rigid and academically based entry requirements (especially if over-subscribed) in an attempt to 'ensure that they recruit more able and more socially 'advantaged' children' (Fitz et al., 2006: 123).

All in all, the current school selection process has been shown to lead to the emergence of a significant degree of social segregation between schools as fewer places for pupils from 'poorer' backgrounds become available at 'better' schools (Dorling, 2011; Fitz et al., 2006; Gorard, Taylor & Fitz, 2003). Gorard et al. (2003) (amongst others) suggest that this process of 'educational sorting' has led to the emergence of so-called 'sink schools' that invariably have low examination pass rates, 'poor' Ofsted ratings, and often long term reputations for academic 'failure' and invariably become much less attractive and marketable to potential pupils and their parents. As a consequence, these so-called 'sink schools' are often more likely to be required to accept potentially problematic transient pupils (such as travellers, immigrants and excluded pupils) due to the spare pupil places they are often left with year on year (Gorard et al., 2003). In relation to the pupils attending these so-called 'sink schools', studies have found that although pupils demonstrate a distinct awareness that they attended a school that was 'demonized' in the

local area for low academic achievement and ill-discipline (Reay, 2004b) they still displayed a sense of belonging towards their school.

Ultimately, therefore, it seems that the relatively low attainment and engagement of many working-class pupils at school should not simply be viewed and considered as an indicator of individual effort or ability. Instead, these outcomes emerge from the 'collective effort of the whole family' (Ball, 2010: 158) as well as friends, peers, teachers, policy and the school itself.

The aim of this section of the literature review has been to examine the literature that addresses the various ways in which social class can come to influence the attainment and engagement of pupils in mainstream schooling. The following section will look at the ways in which social class comes to influence a person's leisure and sports participation, as well as how class also appears influence pupils' ability and willingness to benefit from PE.

Social Class, Physical Education and Active Leisure

In recent years, it has been suggested that contemporary research in PE and Health (PEH) has largely overlooked the issues of social class. However, for Evans and Davies (2008: 200) 'class matters' in PE, especially if we are to gain a balanced or complex understanding of how effective the subject is, and what we can reasonably expected from it as a subject. Therefore, in relation to this, the following section of this chapter will examine the varying ways in which social class comes to impact upon the subject of PE by examining the purported aims of the subject specifically. It will then make consideration of the range of groups that come to impact upon its structure and delivery including teachers, pupils, parents, and policy makers.

Sport and active leisure participation

Despite political, social, and media-based concern regarding the significantly high levels of physical inactivity amongst the British population, data spanning the last 20 years has

consistently confirmed a continued increase in sports participation levels for adults in the UK (ONS, 1999; Roberts, 1995, 1996; SCW, 2003, Sport England, 2015). For young people more specifically, recent data states that over 94% of 11-15 year olds in Britain have been involved in some form of sport in the last week (Sport England, 2015). This has been due, in part, to the on-going popularity of organised sport, as well as young people's increased involvement in a greater proportion of 'lifestyle activities' such as cycling, walking and fitness activities (Coalter, 1996, 2004; De Knop & De Martelaer, 2001; Elling & Knoppers, 2005; Green, 2002; Kristen, Patriksson, & Fridlund, 2003; Quennerstedt & Ohman, 2008; Scheerder et al., 2005c; Seabra, Mendonca, Thomis, Malina, & Maia, 2007; Telama et al., 2002; Telama, Nupponen, & Pieron, 2005).

However, whilst general participation rates have increased over time, not all young people and adults from all social class groups are experiencing the same level of increase. For adults specifically, these rates remain strongly related to social class, with those from the middle-classes up to three-times more likely to participate in sport and PA than sections of the lower working-class (Birchwood et al., 2008; Coalter, 1999, 2004; Coalter et al., 1995; Collins & Kay, 2003; Roberts & Brodie, 1992; Scheerder et al., 2005a). In addition, recent evidence suggests that this trend may be on the increase as weekly participation rates among NS-SEC 1-2 and NS-SEC 3 continues to increase, while a gradual slight decrease has been shown for those adults at the bottom of the social scale (2005 – 26.9% and 2013 – 26.6%) (Sport England, 2013).

For young people more specifically, these differences in overall participation rates between social class groups are much less pronounced when viewed as general activity levels, as young people from different backgrounds demonstrate similar levels of general sporting activity (Green, 2008). This has not only been attributed to increasing levels of participation in 'lifestyles activities' amongst today's young people (Roberts, 1996), but also the ever-increasing availability of flexible leisure time in contemporary society (Roberts,

2011). However, whilst the general levels of participation in sport and PA for young people further down the social scale may be similar to that of their middle-class peers, adolescents from working-class backgrounds generally take part in a narrower range of sports (Dagkas & Stathi, 2007; Duncan, Al-Nakeeb, Nevill, & Jones, 2004; Green et al., 2005). This trend becomes especially relevant when one considers that greater levels and ranges of sports participation in adulthood are much more likely if 'secure foundations have been laid in the form of wide sporting repertoires' through 'committed' participation in a minimum of three activities during childhood (Green, 2002: 173). Ultimately, therefore, because active and committed involvement across a range of different sports during early childhood is more likely to lead to long-term sports involvement in to (and during) adulthood (Green, 2002; Jakobsson et al., 2012; Roberts & Brodie, 1992) it is for this reason that middle-class people are more likely to be involved in sport as adults. This is primarily due to the fact that this social group are more likely to have become 'locked-in' to a range of different sports in their youth (Green, 2002; Roberts & Brodie, 1992).

Overall then, the evidence suggests that the comparatively low rates of participation amongst adults from the working-class in particular, are not simply due to them choosing to dropout of sport as adults. Instead, the under-representation of working-class adults in sports participation data is more strongly influenced by their poverty of childhood sports socialization (Green, 2002). This then means that the narrow sporting repertoires that those from working-class backgrounds develop as children causes many to be much less likely or able to draw upon a range of sports-related skills, knowledge, and experiences in order to remain involved (Jakobsson et al., 2012) in later life. With this in mind, therefore, it is to a more detailed examination behind the reasons for such anomalies and outcomes that this chapter will now turn, beginning with how young people are socialised in the types and levels of participation.

Sports socialization

Due to the fact that sport socialization has been shown to be an important determinant for consistent and active participation in later life (Birchwood et al., 2008; Scheerder et al., 2006; Telama et al., 2005), it is perhaps not surprising that policy-makers and scholars have taken an interest in examining the social processes that come to impact on the sport participation rates of young people from the lower social classes (e.g. Bourdieu, 1978; Hartmann-Tews, 2006; Nielsen, Grønfeldt, Toftegaard-Støckel, & Andersen, 2012; Scheerder et al., 2005b; Van Tuyckom & Scheerder, 2010). One common explanation for their lower participation in organized activities is the financial limitations and lack of sports facilities that limit the participation of working-class families in sport (Bourdieu, 1990; Devís-Devís et al., 2013; Kraaykamp, Oldenkamp, & Breedveld, 2013; Quarmby & Dagkas, 2012). However, further studies suggest that a much more complex interplay of social contexts, relationships, and influences impact upon people's sport participation (Devís-Devís, Beltrán-Carrillo & Peiró-Velert, 2013; Wright, MacDonald, & Groom, 2003) and that these relate closely to social class differences (Dagkas & Stathi, 2007; Humbert et al., 2006; Pot, Verbeek, van der Zwan, & Hilvoorde, 2014; Stuij, 2013). In short, the socio-cultural and economic context of the social network a young person is brought up in has been consistently shown to influence sport participation as well as their involvement in other leisure activities (Bourdieu, 1984; Dagkas & Stathi, 2007; Duncan et al., 2004; Kraaykamp et al., 2013; MacDonald et al., 2004; Quarmby & Dagkas, 2010; Wheeler, 2014).

Parental influence on sports and leisure participation

It has been consistently shown that the family is a major socialising influence on young peoples' involvement and engagement in sport (Dixon, Warner, & Bruening, 2008; Kraaykamp et al., 2013; Light, Harvey, & Memmert, 2013; Quarmby & Dagkas, 2010, 2012; Pot et al., 2014; Wheeler, 2014). In relation to differing sports participation rates between social class groups, evidence suggests that the socialising effects of families (Anderssen,

Wold, & Torsheim, 2006; Evans & Davies, 2010; Quarmby & Dagkas, 2010) and the differing attitudes and approaches that parents from particular social backgrounds have towards 'developing' their children is an important consideration to make. In simple terms, it has been claimed that middle-class parents are much more likely to generate certain predispositions towards sport and physical activity participation amongst their offspring (Evans & Davies, 2010) by investing heavily and strategically in their children so that they become (and remain) involved in sport (Ball, 2003, 2009; Birchwood et al., 2008; Chambers, 2012; Evans, 2004; Evans & Davies, 2010; Levine-Rasky, 2009; Reay, 2000, 2004; Wheeler, 2014; Wheeler & Green, 2014). In order to do this, research has found that middle-class families often see participation in physical activity and sports clubs/initiatives as an everyday 'task' to be incorporated into their everyday routines (Harrington, 2009; Kay, 2009; Shaw, 2008; Wheeler, 2014, Wheeler & Green, 2014; Wright et al., 2003). It has also been found (Lareau, 2003; Stuij, 2013) that children of parents from the higher social class groups have strictly regulated and scheduled organised activity commitments imposed on them by their parents which led to the children (and invariably their parents) having very little free time. In many cases, this approach has been stimulated by a genuine sense of 'fear' that their children may 'fall behind' their peers and, therefore, many 'prudent middle class parent[s]' see their children as 'projects' that need to be 'deliberately inculcated' (Ball, 2009: 8-9). This approach is often taken in order that they develop 'complex set[s] of physical, social, and intellectual skills' (Bourdieu 2004: 19) that will enable them to access and benefit from a range of other life opportunities (including PE). In order to do this, there is further evidence to suggest that middle-class parents are increasingly likely to utilise the specialist childhood PE/sport advisers and services 'that thrive on the commercial exploitation of parents' anxieties' (e.g. Tumbletots) in order to ensure that their children gain an all-important head start in life (Evans & Davies, 2010: 771).

It is important at this point to highlight the evidence that 'sporty' working-class children also often become involved in sports as a result of their parents involvement and participation (Pot et al., 2014; Stuij, 2013; Wheeler, 2014). In addition, there are also studies that highlight the fact and that once these young people are involved in sport, the level of support and encouragement demonstrated by their families/parents is very similar to that of children from the higher social classes (Dagkas & Stathi, 2007; Pot et al., 2014; Wheeler, 2014). However, when viewed more generally, studies do consistently state that children from lower social class families are generally less stimulated by their parents towards participation in organised sports (e.g. Bourdieu, 1978, 1984; Dagkas & Stathi, 2007; Nielsen et al., 2012; Scheerder et al., 2002). Indeed, Vincent and Ball (2007: 1068) suggest that working-class parents are less likely to take the view and approach that their children are 'a project for development', preferring instead, to concentrate on the providing for the more 'everyday' needs of their children as opposed to developing their special talents (Lareau, 2003).

The influence of friends and peers on sports and leisure participation

In addition to the influential role of parents, there is also evidence that peers and friends are significant when attempting to understand the types and rates of sports participation among young people from working-class backgrounds (Allender, Cowburn, & Foster, 2006; Dagkas & Stathi, 2007). It has also been found that children within this social class group are much more likely to take part in active leisure that takes place recreationally, outdoors and among friends, peers and siblings (Stuij, 2013). Therefore, it is evident that those young people from working-class families are more likely to respond to their less structured week by spending long periods of time outside with friends away from adult supervision (Dunning, 2002). However, although participation in these more informal types of physical

activity have been shown to promote and develop useful and beneficial skills among those involved (e.g. social/organizational skills and an ability to adjust available facilities) (Bernstein, 1974; Nielsen et al., 2012; Schultz, 1999; Stuij, 2013) this type of active participation has been 'underrated' when compared to various benefits linked to regular and long-term engagement in organized sports (Schultz, 1999).

Overall, therefore, when the social class backgrounds, differing parenting approaches, and influence of friends/peers are considered together it is evident that a combination of these influences comes to impact upon the types of activities that they engage in, as well as their involvement in sport per se (Dagkas & Stathi, 2007; Engstrom, 2008). One of the reasons for this relates to the fact that a person's upbringing often dictates what is considered a suitable leisure activity for them to take part in (Arbercrombie & Ward, 2000; Crossley, 2001) and the likelihood of them remaining actively involved in it (Crossley, 2001; Dagkas & Stathi, 2007; Engstrom, 2008; Quarmby & Dagkas, 2010). For example, the playing of certain sports (such as football) are often preferred by young working-class males due to the fact that the characteristics of the game provide them with the opportunity to 'legitimately' demonstrate their ability within a socially 'valuable' and high status physical activity (Azzarito & Solomon, 2005; Bhana, 2008; Bramham, 2003; Sabo & Panepinto, 1990). By playing football, they are also able to demonstrate the socially valuable attributes of physical ability and masculinity (Bhana, 2008; Frosh et al., 2002; Messner & Sabo, 1990) that are synonymous with working-class lives and communities.

Leisure

Leisure time generally has become a significant aspect of modern life with more people now involved in a greater range of leisure activities than ever before (Roberts, 2005). Research also suggests that this has been influenced by an increasingly significant trend for people to spend much of their leisure time at home with friends and family (Cricher,

2006; Harrington, 2006), or involved in modern commercial aspects of leisure such as shopping, playing computer games, and eating out (Furlong & Cartmel, 2007; Roberts, 2006).

For younger people more specifically, not only has this group consistently been shown to have the most available free time, but studies also suggest that today's youth have a much wider range of activities available to them when compared to previous generations (Fredricks & Eccles, 2005; Green, 2010). As a result, Roberts (1997: 3) suggests that young people have become 'the section of the population with the highest levels and most diverse patterns of cultural consumption'. However, young people's leisure interests and lifestyles are often characterised by degrees of changeability and instability (Schizzerotto & Lucchinni, 2002) as they typically dabble, experiment, drop, and replace the wide range of leisure interests on offer within their busy lives (Roberts & Brodie, 1992; Roberts, 1999). In relation to what young people do with their leisure time, evidence suggests that teenagers generally continue to have very different leisure interests from their parents. Typical activities often take place in public spaces, that remain highly favoured places for young people, where they can 'hang out' with friends in order to socialise, maintain a sense of freedom from parental control, and begin to construct their own identities (Arai & Pedler, 2003; Cotterell, 2007; Green, 2010; Roberts, 2008).

However, what individual young people tend to do, when, and whom they do it with, is very much dependent on their social class background, as childhood leisure pursuits remain 'classed' (Roberts, 2012). This is not only due to the financial costs involved with some activities (Roberts, 2012) but also because young peoples' leisure lifestyles are strongly influenced by the leisure preferences and social resources of their family and friends (Cricher, 2006; Green, 2010; Roberts, 2006, 2012; Roberts & Brodie, 1992). Ultimately, therefore, whilst the leisure preferences of all young people will gradually become more 'commercial' and independent as they get older (Roberts, 2008) what young

people from differing social groups can, or choose to do with their leisure time is still bound up in what is socially 'suitable' for them (Engstrom, 2008). In relation to this, it seems clear that even when young people take part in similar leisure activities (such as listening to music or going on foreign holidays) evidence suggests that they are much more likely to do so among close friends, with similar social origins, and educational backgrounds, who are heading towards similar class destinations (Critcher, 2006; Hollands, 2002; MacRae, 2004 cited in Roberts, 2012). Overall, therefore, what young people 'choose' to do in relation to sporting participation, active leisure, or recreational free time is closely bound up with their social class background due to the fact that adolescents seem to be strongly influenced by the actions and attitudes of a range of different people (e.g. friends) and institutions (e.g. schools), regarding what they do, when and whom they do it with (Bourdieu, 1984; Critcher, 2006; Engstrom, 2008; Green, 2010; Hollands, 2002; Roberts, 2006, 2012; Roberts & Brodie, 1992).

The role of PE in addressing class-related differences

It has already been stated that in order to address long-standing anomalies regarding sports participation between social class groups, a prudent approach would be to develop wider sporting repertoires amongst young people in the form of committed involvement across a range of sports during early childhood (Jakobsson et al., 2012; Roberts & Brodie, 1992; Roberts, 2014). In relation to this, whilst there have long been contentious debates surrounding the exact nature and purpose of PE (Fairclough, Stratton & Baldwin, 2002; Kay, 2003; Kirk, 1992, 2002, 2003, 2005; Green, 2000, 2003; Penney, 1999; Smith & Parr, 2007; Woodhouse, 1996) there does seem to be some broad agreement that a main aim of PE as a subject should be to promote active lifestyles (Green, 2000, 2012) via a breadth of sporting experiences. In addition, another broadly accepted aim of the subject is to provide young people with the 'dispositional resources that may promote participation in

sport and PA both in and out of school' (Evans & Davies, 2010: 768) and in to adulthood (Trudeau & Shephard, 2005).

In the first instance, there is some evidence to suggest that contemporary PE has indeed had a positive impact on increased levels of general participation among young people by broadening the activities offered in schools and placing a greater emphasis on lifestyle-based sports and activities (Coalter, 2004; Green et al., 2005; Harris & Penney, 2002; Smith, Thurston, Green & Lamb, 2007). More specifically, suggestions have been made that some young people would not take part in particular sports in their leisure were it not for being introduced to them by their PE teachers, and that school PE may well be the only opportunity that some young people get to engage with sport and active recreation (Green, 2012). Where PE experiences have been deemed to be of sufficient quality, school PE programmes have also been shown to contribute significantly to the overall amount of moderate-to-intense PA of school-age children (Trudeau & Shepard, 2005) by altering the range of curriculum activities available to pupils (Evans & Davies, 2010). When looking at older (KS4) school pupils, these positive outcomes have been shown to be enhanced when their PE curriculum involved greater degrees of choice linked to intrinsically rewarding, lifestyle-based, recreational activities compared to highly-structured, teacher-organized lessons (Green, 2012; Smith, 2006). However, the greatest degree of positive impact coming from PE has been shown to relate to those that are more 'biddable'; that is to say young people who are already engaging with sport as a result of the family socialization towards active sports participation (Birchwood et al., 2008; Green, 2012; Roberts & Brodie, 1992).

Despite these claims of 'success' in relation to the ability of PE as a subject to facilitate lifelong sports engagement, however, the perceived role of PE in promoting sports participation often taken for granted (Corbin, 2002; Dixon et al., 2008; Fairclough et al., 2002; Flintoff, Long & Hylton, 2005; Green, 2000, 2003; Haerens, Kirk, Cardon, de

Bourdeaudhui, & Vansteenkiste, 2010; Harris, 2005; MacNamara et al., 2011; Shepherd & Trudeau, 2000; Trudeau & Shephard, 2005; Xu, Chepyator-Thomson, Liu, & Schmidlein, 2010). In addition, there also appears to be very little evidence to support claims that any recent increase in youth sports participation is down to PE policy and practice (Kirk, 2002; Trudeau & Shephard, 2005). In fact, it remains to be shown that 'PE, in itself, has any, let alone a significant, role to play' in future participation (Green, 2012: 2), with little or no evidence currently able to support claims that 'normal PE' (Gard, 2009) has had to a positive impact on regular levels of 'physical activity in the short-term, let alone medium, and long-term sports participation' (Green, 2012: 2).

In relation to young people from working-class backgrounds, some authors suggest that PE appears unable to ever promote the participation of these young people due to the fact that the subject is unlikely to ever alter the 'social patterns and inequalities' (Evans & Davies, 2010: 768) to which they are exposed. Therefore, for those from working-class backgrounds more specifically, it seems that PE 'flatters to deceive' (Evans & Davies, 2008: 201) in any attempts to promote engagement in sport by failing to address the stubborn differences in participation rates that exist between different social class groups (Evans & Davies, 2010). The reason for this, some authors suggest, is that the subject of PE cannot countervail against wider social processes (Dagkas & Stathi, 2007; Green et al., 2005: 193; Kirk, 2005). As a result 'we need to 'look elsewhere' (Ball, 2009: 2) in any attempt to fully understand the broader influences on participation that appear to have led to such little change in the structural patterns outside school. This is due to the fact that the school is the 'the wrong place to look...at least in isolation from other sorts of changes in other parts of society' (Ball, 2009: 2) if we are to understand any form of inequality relating to education, and in this case PE.

The influence of social background on PE

There is evidence to suggest that the pragmatic and proactive approach that many middle-class parents have to 'developing' the sporting interests, predispositions, and repertoires of their children does appear to lead to their children being more 'set up' to access and benefit from the PE. This seems due to the fact the pedagogic edge or advantage that many middle-class children gain as a result of their more proactive parents enables them to 'hit the ground running' in relation to their ability to access and 'benefit' from PE due to their greater state of 'learning readiness' (Ball, 2009: 9). There is further evidence to suggest that sport participation anomalies in adulthood may relate to the fact that many 'middle-class' schools are able to build on the existing skills, attitudes and knowledge of their pupils (Evans & Davies, 2010). This then means that middle-class pupils are able to embrace the range of PE and school sport opportunities available to them and subsequently develop their sporting repertoires.

In contrast, whilst some young people from families lower down the social scale may 'have the inclination but not the resources to engage consistently' with activities that promote skill development and participation, Evans and Davies (2010: 781), suggest that 'success' in PE is much less of an option for working-class pupils. This is due to the fact that they are less likely to 'possess neither the right' forms of embodiment for participation nor the skills to perform in sport' when they arrive at school due to the attitudes and actions of their parents. As a result, this has led to suggestions from some, that the strong and wide-ranging influences of parenthood and family background not only cause inequalities in education and PE specifically to exist, but the secondary school PE departments and teachers within them may actually be fighting a losing battle to address inequalities in skills and participation from the start. For Evans and Davies (2010) this is due to the fact that patterns of physical development are often set before the start of formal education (Evans & Davies, 2010).

An additional reason regarding the purported lack of success of PE in addressing participation anomalies relates to the fact that a focus on developing and addressing ability has all but disappeared in mainstream PE discourse (Evans, 2004; Evans & Davies, 2008). Claims have been made that mainstream PE has become so absorbed in attempts to alter children's attitudes towards issues such as diet or health, that all focus on enhancing the physical ability of children, as well as their opportunities to express and develop it, has been lost (Wright & Burrows, 2006). In relation to this, Evans (2004) claims, the role of PE as a subject has, therefore, moved away from a focus on its capacity to develop and effect changes in pupils' physical literacy and intelligence capacities, towards areas such as motivation, health-related behaviour, 'fitness', 'talent' for 'performance'. It seems to some (Evans, 2004: 102), therefore, that rather than being concerned about how ability is recognised, configured, and nurtured in PE, we 'may have become so concerned to make children feel healthy, happy, and good about their own and others' bodies' that we have overlooked the fact that schools are also there to 'make a difference' to the differences in ability.

The issue and concept of ability in PE, and how this is generated and valued, has become an important issue for the subject generally, as well as for working-class pupils more specifically. In the first instance, several authors state that the prevailing view of ability in PE has come to be viewed as being ingrained in the 'positive eugenic perspective' (Hay, 2005: 44) - that is to say, something that is 'natural' and/or indicative of motivation and effort (Bird, 1994; Evans & Davies, 2006). It has also been suggested that ability is often seen as a lone issue (Evans & Davies, 2008) in many schools and PE departments, and that individuals who possess the 'right' kinds of ability, such as competence, competition, skill, and physical fitness, (Hunter, 2004) are subsequently recognized and/or viewed as being more desirable, and able, by the most dominant (e.g. PE teachers) in the

'field' (PE). For Hay and MacDonald (2010: 16) the more an individual's resources (e.g. personal characteristics) which are 'collected, constituted and employed through habitus' (Hay & MacDonald, 2010: 16) match 'the values that prevail within [PE], the more that individual is recognised as possessing ability' (Hay, 2005: 47). Inevitably, therefore, if this view and definition of ability in PE is accepted, the outcome of this is that many pupils who do not possess 'ability' in this sense/definition become alienated in the process (Evans & Davies, 2010; Hunter, 2004; Rich, 2004). In relation to the focus of this study, some authors suggest that this group is most likely to be those young people from working-class backgrounds (Evans, 2004, Evans & Davies, 2008, 2010). In response to this, therefore, Evans (2004) has sought to challenge the traditional eugenic understanding of ability and 'explore what ability means and how it is configured' (Evans, 2004: 99). This is due to the fact that ability not only needs to be viewed and understood as a socially constructed concept (Evans, 2004), but also because the abilities of young working-class people should be seen as products of their social background rather than individualized choices or abilities. However, further claims have been made that contemporary PE consistently actually fails to view ability as a 'social formation' that emerges from a person's social background, material conditions, and relationships linked to the social class background and culture (Evans & Davies, 2008). Instead, a performance-related view of ability prevails in PE which in turn emerges as problematic for young people from working-class backgrounds due to the fact that PE is often not effective in addressing the socially constructed abilities and needs of many working-class pupils (Wilkinson et al., 2013). Therefore, it has been stated that PE needs to move away from a concept of ability that values and develops a narrow range of performance-related and 'natural' abilities towards a greater focus on 'educability' and 'educate'. This needs to be done through the process of actual 'physical education' in order to effectively develop all abilities for all pupils, rather than focusing on areas such as 'talent' for 'performance' in the interest of health and/or

participation in organized sport (Evans, 2004: 96). While Evans and Davies (2008) acknowledge the fact that PE 'should be concerned with levels of exercise, fitness, and health', they also highlight that this should not be at the expense of 'the nature and quality' of 'educational experiences in PE' that could address the PE experiences of many working-class pupils.

As an extension to this alleged change in focus of PE, there have also been claims that PE staff themselves can further limit the likelihood of their working-class pupils developing ability and interest in a broader range of sports (both in and out of school). This is due to the fact that some teachers have been shown to view the competencies and attitudes of their working-class pupils as fixed characteristics and strong indicators of an innate ability (Ball, 2009). Rather than the abilities and attitudes of their pupils being viewed as products of their biology and culture (Evans, Davies, & Rich, 2009), some authors (Bird, 1994) suggest that many PE teachers actually view and assess the ability of their working-class pupils as something that they have been born with, rather than, as Wright and Burrows (2006) suggest, something that should be placed in context with their particular cultures and social background. As a result, claims have been made that PE departments with a high proportion of working-class pupils can often 'ignore the social, cultural and, economic influences that may have led to their pupils demonstrating particular interests and levels and ranges of ability' (Ball, 2009: 15), and instead view these socially created traits and attitudes as innate abilities that are extremely difficult to change (Wright & Burrows, 2006).

Ultimately then, it has been suggested that these views of PE teachers can come to impact upon the very way in which PE is structured and delivered for working-class pupils in particular. This is due to the fact that PE in predominantly working-class schools is often seen as needing to make up for the innate deficiencies in students' characters and lives in order to correct and treat the ability deficiencies of its working-class pupils (Evans, 2004;

Wright & Burrows, 2006). There is further evidence to suggest that whilst 'ability' tends to be characterized as a 'one-dimensional, static entity' by many PE teachers (Evans, 2004: 98-99), this can not only cause schools (and PE departments) to reproduce and build on existing preconceptions that endorses a rather limited conception of 'ability' in the process (Ball, 2003), but PE then fails to challenge and change 'the 'ability' deficits...and differences that children develop outside school' (Evans, 2004: 101).

In addition to these attitudes, some authors further suggest that PE staff 'offer' their pupils activities that suit the preconceived abilities and interests of their pupils (e.g. football for working-class boys) (Dagkas & Stathi, 2007). This can then lead to a PE and school sport 'diet' that not only reduces the likelihood of pupils expanding their sporting repertoires, but also Shilling (2003: 477) suggests, often 'stands to reinforce existing unequal quantities and qualities of physical capital' both inside and outside of school.

Further to this, there is also evidence to suggest that PE teachers' identities, sporting interests, and ethos in relation to PE and school sport are also key influential factors in the curriculum design and types of lessons that they offer pupils (Fairclough, et al., 2002; Green, 2003). With regard to the background of many PE teachers, studies have shown that the opportunity to work with children in order to help them develop physically (Clarke, 2009; Darling-Hammond & Sclan, 1996; Dodds, Doolittle, & Pinkham, 1991; O'Bryant, O'Sullivan, & Raudensky, 2000; O'Sullivan, MacPhail, & Tannehill, 2009; Tsangaridou, 2006; Zounhia, Chatoupis, & Amoutzas, 2006) is a common reason for trainees wanting to enter the profession. However, a more dominant theme behind the decision to pursue a career as a PE teacher is their past and current involvement in sports (Ralph & McPhail, 2014) and the perceived opportunity that the job provides in enabling them to maintain their interest and involvement in sport (Dodds et al., 1991; Matanim & Collier, 2003; O'Bryant et al., 2000; O'Sullivan et al., 2009; Zounhia et al., 2006). Studies also consistently state that the activities favored by many PE teachers entering the

profession and/or initial teacher training (ITT) are 'traditional' team sports such as football, netball, and basketball, while activities such as dance and OAA consistently come out as areas of subject weakness among PE staff (Capel & Katene, 2000; Wong & Louie, 2002) – a pattern that is not always addressed via the science-based content of many 'PE' or sport based undergraduate degrees (Capel & Katene, 2000). As a result, despite individualized 'lifestyle activities' becoming key features of young people's leisure-sport and physical activity lifestyles (Coalter, 1999, 2004; Green et al., 2005a; Roberts, 1996a; Smith, 2006), the preference towards, and confidence in, more traditional team sports among many PE teachers means that school PE curricular remain dominated by a narrow-range of 'traditional' and competitive team sports (e.g. football) (Flintoff, 2005; Kirk, 2005a, 2005b; MacPhail, Kirk & Eley, 2003; Penney & Chandler, 2000; Penney & Harris, 1997; Smith et al., 2007). Further to this, a range of authors have also highlighted the fact that although 'breadth' and 'balance' was initially inferred via the activity areas in the NCPE 1992 (Smith et al., 2007), and some recent curriculum changes have sought to promote health-related exercise (HRE) above team games (Department for Education and Employment [DfEE]/Qualifications and Curriculum Authority [QCA], 2013) PE-related policy documents have kept competitive sport and team games as their most prominent feature (DfE, 2013; Department for Culture, Media and Sport [DCMS], 2000, 2011; Kirk, 2004, 2005a, 2005b; Penney, 2002a, 2002b; Penney & Evans, 1999). Indeed for Penney and Evans (1999, 2005) since the early 1990s, successive Conservative and Labour governments have sought not only to 're-establish' the centrality of sport in schools but also to prioritize 'traditional' team games in particular.

In addition to these influences from teachers, there have been studies to examine the extent to which 'teacher's expectations of their pupils' ability...might be a partial determinant of those pupils' ability (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968: 410) via the process of a self-fulfilling prophecy (Merton, 1957). Working within school classrooms generally,

Rosenthal and Jacobson (1968) found that when teachers were told a particular group of pupils had shown a high level of intellect and intellectual competence (despite no actual difference in reality), the teachers subsequently not only viewed these pupils as more 'interesting and curious', (Martinek, Crowe & Rejeski, 1982) but the pupils themselves showed considerable gains in IQ tests. In relation to these outcomes, the authors (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968) concluded that children who are expected to grow intellectually do so as a result of their own self-belief as well as the ways that they were viewed and treated by their teachers. When applied to PE more specifically, Martinek et al (1982: 12) found that 'if a teacher believes a student to be highly skilled in an activity, and somehow conveys that impression, that student may meet the teacher's expectations' and this can be communicated from the teacher to the pupil(s) in a range of subtle, and not so subtle ways. These outcomes are thought to occur as a result of a 'combination of expectation leading to self-fulfilment and the expectation that this then produces' (Good & Brophy, 1978: 72) with regards to both the pupils and the teachers. More specifically, Good and Brophy (1978) suggested that as the teacher expects specific behaviour from certain students, these expectations cause the teacher to behave differently to these students which leads to this changes in the students' self-concept, motivation and aspiration that come to shape the pupils achievement and behaviour. Ultimately, this then causes the students' behaviour and achievement come to match what is expected of them. This process has been shown to occur as a result of teaching climate in lessons (friendliness to pupils) Rosenthal (1974), the type and level of feedback provided to pupils (Lanzetta & Hannah, 1969), and greater levels of input in the way of teaching materials (Mclean, 1974). In terms of PE, teachers' perceptions of their pupils have been linked to issues such as Somatotype (Sleet, 1969), the sex of the pupil (male bias) (Brophy & Good, 1974), and even physical attractiveness (Landy & Sigall, 1974).

The types of schools in which staff work can also come to influence and alter the actions and attitudes of PE teachers (Lawson, 1988). Subsequently, the suggested tendency for many PE teachers to favour the playing and teaching of traditional team games as a result of their own PE experiences (Green, 2003), combined with the 'demands' of the pupils with whom they work (Lawson, 1988) has the potential to lead many PE teachers to favour a narrow range of game based on traditional and competitive team sports (Green, 2003). As a result, therefore, authors suggests that many teachers fail to challenge the established inequalities in PE and youth sport and instead might simply (and perhaps unwittingly) be reinforcing inequality in PE (Dagkas, 2011). This is done by delivering particular sports that not only match their own interests, abilities, and knowledge, but simply stand to maintain and reinforce the narrow range of sports in which their pupils engage and participate regularly anyway.

Ultimately, therefore, whilst many working-class pupils rely more heavily on their school PE experiences in order to develop understandings of their body, and develop their abilities/sporting repertoires (Dagkas & Stathi, 2007:381), the PE 'diet' that they are offered at school can 'reinforce existing unequal quantities and qualities of physical capital' (Shilling, 2004: 477) and sporting repertoires. Therefore, for Evans and Bairner (2013: 155) whilst 'PE can and should imbue pupils with physical and cultural capital, (and) should try to alter and impact attitudes toward who plays what and when in and outside school (and)... leave as many as possible with a lasting desire to be fit, stay healthy, develop and learn' in reality, the focus and structure of PE in many working-class schools often accentuates, existing inequalities of ability and participation.

In order to address the potentially constraining influence of PE teachers and departments, pupils are increasingly able to have more say in their own PE school sport provision and delivery so that pupils feel more empowered and their PE experiences are subsequently more meaningful and relevant to them (Azzarito & Solomon, 2005;

Bramham, 2003; Cook-Sather, 2002; Flintoff & Scraton, 2001; Oliver, 2010; Roberts, 1996; Smith & Parr, 2007; Smith, Green & Thurston, 2009). By offering 'options' to pupils (usually KS4), there emerges the potential for minimising the constraining influence of PE departments and PE staff regarding the narrow range of sports on offer. However, there is evidence to suggest that, in reality, option 'choice' can often be extremely limited (especially for boys) towards a narrow range of traditional teams played predominantly outdoors (Bramham, 2003; Smith et al., 2009) with 'little or no room for consultation, let alone negotiation regarding the portfolio of activities made available to them' (Smith et al., 2009: 210). Therefore, evidence suggests that many pupils appear to actually find themselves being 'free to choose but not in conditions of their own choosing' (Smith et al., 2009: 210). This is due to the fact the choices available to them appear to remain heavily influenced by the teachers' own preference and competence (Green, 2003; Smith et al., 2009) as well as the strong preconceptions of what the pupils will actively participate in. Certain authors suggest, however, that for working-class males in particular, this narrow range of 'options' offered in many KS4 PE curricular may not always necessarily be perceived as a negative outcome. This is due to the fact that the sports on offer almost always seem to include ones that working-class males perceive themselves to be good at, actively enjoy, and social value – namely football (Azzarito & Solomon, 2005; Bhana, 2008; Bramham, 2003; Sabo & Panepinto, 1990; Smith et al., 2009). There is further evidence to suggest that this outcome may be further accentuated by the increasingly democratic and 'equal' relationship that many of these pupils in particular 'enjoy' with their teachers (Kilminster, 1998, Smith et al., 2009; Wouters, 1987) that enables pupils to actively negotiate what they want, and inevitably will do in PE (Green, 2003; Smith et al., 2009). This relationship appears to be further accentuated when PE teachers sense that pupils may display appropriate and manageable behaviour (Green, 2003 cited in Smith et al., 2009) if prevented from controlling what they do, how, and whom they do it with (Cothran,

Hodges-Kulinna & Garrahy, 2009). Therefore, some studies suggest that teachers working in 'tough' schools appear more inclined to allow their pupils to 'negotiate' (and in some cases demand) what sports that they will play in PE in order that good behaviour and active participation will be encouraged and promoted amongst the pupils (Cothran et al., 2009). Whilst some teachers may be able to use their knowledge and pedagogical skills to continue to 'offer' a broad range of sports, the curriculum activities that often potentially lead to pupils displaying poor behaviour are often removed from the list of 'options' (Cothran et al., 2009). This then leads to a significant narrowing of the curriculum on offer and a constraining impact on sporting interest, knowledge, and repertoire of the pupils in such schools.

Overall, therefore, it seems that within 'tough', working-class schools in particular, KS4 options (and even the 'formal' PE curriculum) can often come to be dominated by active and competitive lessons in 'traditional' working-class sports such as football. This is done in order to appease the majority of male students, as well as matching the knowledge and skills of the staff, as a way of promoting compliance, participation, and 'good' behaviour in lessons. Although many PE teachers may be responding to degrees of 'localism' linked to their own schools (Green, 2000) the traditional class-related activities offered as part of a supposedly negotiated curriculum often reinforces the existing inequalities and patterns of participation that exist for young people for different social backgrounds. As activity choice has been shown to be much narrower in schools located in lower working/working-class neighbourhoods (Green, 2003; Smith et al., 2009) it seems that the narrow range of options actually 'offered' emerges as a direct response to perceptions of what the pupils will do rather than what the pupils actually need. Overall, therefore, it is evident that PE as a subject may actually have 'little capacity by itself to alter the structural conditions which determine people's opportunities' and may actually be 'helping to reproduce the patterns

of success and failure along class lines that stubbornly persist in their lives' (Evans & Davies, 2010: 782).

Masculinity, sport and PE

In addition to the various ways that the structure and delivery of PE can impact on a range of outcomes for working-class pupils (e.g. sporting repertoires), the ideals and expectations linked to masculinity for these pupils also emerges as influential. It has already been stated in the thesis that the 'idealised' and dominant form of masculinity (Connell, 1990: 83) that exists in many working-class schools like ACS (Swain, 2010) consistently matches the aggressive and physical view of masculinity that is evident and valued in the wider community (Smith, 2007; Swain, 2010). When this influence is linked to sport and PE more specifically, it is perhaps not surprising that sport is viewed as the very bastion of male domination (Messner, 1988, 1990; Messner & Sabo, 1990; Sabo & Runfola, 1980) with physical performances in PE and sport commonly seen as emblematic of gender itself (Connell, 2000, 2008; Gruneau & Whitson, 1993). For young working-class males in particular, sport (and PE) provides the opportunity for them to develop and demonstrate the attributes and traits that closely match those valued in their lives outside of the school environment. Not only does it provide environments where boys learn how to impose themselves forcefully and mask pain (Hickey, 2008), but many dominant masculine characteristics and attributes such as 'hardness', lack of empathy, strength, power, aggression, and heterosexuality (Bramham, 2003; Connell, 1990; Kirk, 1993; Messner, 1992; Messner & Sabo, 1994; Miedzian, 1992; Parker, 1996; Swain, 2000). Indeed, the importance of sport as a leading definer in the formation of masculinities has been recognised by a number of writers (see, for example; Connell, 1995, 1996, 2000; Hayward & Mac an Ghail, 1996; Mac an Ghail, 1994; Messner & Sabo, 1990; Whitson, 1990) leading to sport being seen by many as an entry into the world of men (Swain, 2010).

When these issues are related to PE, the school PE curriculum provides a strong link between the dominance of competitive team games (especially at ACS) and the valuing of extreme masculine behaviors linked physicality, strength, and physical ability in order to perform effectively in sport/PE (Bramham, 2003; Hague & Haavind, 2011; Hay & Macdonald, 2010; Parker, 1996; Redelius, Fagrell, & Larsson, 2009; Tischler & McCaughtry, 2011; Wright & Burrows, 2006). Indeed, because of the importance of the body in PE, and the association of sports and sporting prowess with hegemonic masculinities (Epstein et al., 2001; Fitzclarence & Hickey, 2001) PE lessons where sport features highly become an important arena for acting out hyper-masculinities for young males (Paechter, 2003). Interestingly, some authors have shown that this influence can be just as prominent in the changing rooms where teasing about sexual experiences, and displays of dominant and aggressive behaviours and attitudes can serve to reinforce 'already formed gender identities (Sabo, 1994a: 38) and even promote a level of inter-male dominance where the 'minority...dominates the masses' (Sabo, 1994b: 86). However, it is an ability to play sport 'well' and 'properly' in suitable activities during PE that serves to shape and promote the traditional masculine identity of any young male (Connell, 1990; Messner & Sabo, 1990; Parker, 1996). Due to the fact that displays of sporting ability are generally social events – in that they take place in front of peers and friends - the construction of masculinity in PE/sport is primarily a collective enterprise, where the peer group come to define, and often police, what it is to be a 'real male' (Connell, 2000; Lesko, 2000; Swain, 2010) especially in traditionally working-class areas. Therefore, PE lessons and competitive sports especially 'provide an open stage for...boys to perform their masculinities on a regular basis in...a series of set-piece, highly visible, ritualised and stylised exhibitions' (Swain, 2000: 13), with the dominant, hegemonic group able to 'force an interpretation of what masculinity should be' (Edley & Wetherall, 1995: 129).

For male pupils and those from the working-class in particular, therefore, matching

(or not as the case may be) the admired and dominant pattern of masculinity has been shown to put varying forms of pressure and expectation on all boys within the culture (Connell, 2008; Frosh et al., 2002). One of the main reasons for this pertains to the fact that PE as a subject, and certain activities in particular, provide many young males with the opportunity to attain high social status in the PE setting (Hill, 2013). This is due to the fact that sport-based physical education settings exist as spaces where similar hegemonic masculinities are privileged over others (Bramham, 2003; Drummond, 2003; Larsson, Fagrell & Redelius, 2009; Parker, 1996) where pupils are often keen to defend their social position/status in the group/lesson whilst simultaneously subordinating the 'others' (Swain, 2000). Studies that have examined this in greater detail, found that although a hierarchy of pupil-defined masculinities existed for all, the aggressive and masculine forms of behavior were dominant (Parker, 1996) and that for certain pupils in particular, this led to a certain status and prestige. This often then subsequently leads to pupils deliberately displaying aggressive, 'macho' forms of behaviour, which are seen as a way of establishing their masculine authority, and subsequently procuring status within the peer group (Swain, 2010) in order to establish and develop a social pecking-order in which those who are successful dominate (Paechter, 2003). Consequently, within this hyper-masculine, 'cut and thrust' world (Connell, 2000: 162) of the PE environment, it is the incessant search for status among the peer group that impels boys to 'take up the offer' of the collective group norms and behaviors (Smith, 2007). In contrast, however, one of the consequences of an admired, dominant pattern of masculinity (Frosh et al., 2002) resulting from the social presence of friends and peers (see, for example; Adler & Adler, 1998; Connolly, 1998, 2000; Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998; Mac an Ghaill, 1994) is that those pupils unable (or in some cases unwilling) match this dominant view of masculinity are often subordinated leading to practices of bullying, shaming, violating and excluding (Hickey & Keddie, 2004; Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Michaelis, 2000; Mills, 2001; Skelton, 2001; Pringle, 2004, 2005; Walker,

1988) and/or expose to depreciatory labels and accompanying treatment associated with them ('nerd', 'geek', 'poofta', 'girl', 'pussie', 'pansy', (Hickey, 2008; Newman, Murray, & Lussier, 2001). Indeed, some authors have found specific examples of where those pupils deemed subordinate by the dominant group with regards to their masculine traits and abilities, were largely ignored in lessons and were frequently derided and ridiculed for their lack of skill and prowess (Swain, 2010). In this context, those boys who are not good at, or dislike physical activities and sport, or who enjoy those forms associated with femininity (e.g. dance) stand out particularly strongly (Gard, 2001). This is due to the fact that those who choose not to participate, or even take an interest, in the hyper-masculine male sports are very likely to have their identities calibrated against the masculinity of PE/sport (Hickey, 2008). Overall, therefore, research suggests that school sport and PE practices typically privilege the 'sporty boys' and (re)produce an influential form of masculinity while acting to marginalise other ways of performing masculinities (e.g. Connell, 1990; Griffin, 1985; Hasbrook & Harris, 1999; Kenway & Fitzclarence, 1997; Light & Kirk, 2000; Parker, 1996; Pringle, 2008; Skelton, 1996; Skelton, 2000; Swain, 2000).

In the UK, it is often the sport of football that acts as a key signifier in constructing hegemonic masculinities in schools by serving to perpetuate the divisive influence of masculine pressures and expectations (Connelly, 1998; Renold, 1997; Skelton, 2001; Swain, 2000; Nayak, 2003). In fact for Swain (2000: 107), the game is almost entirely predicated on a level of physicality that 'personifies the acme of masculinity, and communicates ideals of fitness, strength, competition, power, and domination' (Swain, 2000: 107). When linked to young working-class males in particular, studies have shown that football not only provides the kind of social landscape where footballing prowess represents *the* prestige resource in signifying 'successful' masculinity (Smith, 2007), but played 'properly' it can match the time-honored tradition of working-class masculine heritage founded in the physical demands made (Smith, 2007). Overall, therefore, football

is consistently seen as a key component in the formation and reinforcement of boys' masculinity (Swain, 2010) where the aggressive intent, territorial dominance, and commitment matches what it traditionally means 'to be manly in sports [namely being]... competitive, successful, dominating, aggressive, stoical, goal-directed and physically strong' (Messner & Sabbo, 1994: 38).

Research questions

Based on the gaps in the literature, specific research questions were formulated in order to provide a specific aim for the focus of the study. Throughout the research process a consistent attempt was made to consider the research questions in relation to the broader lives of the pupils at ACS. The research questions were:

1. To what extent do working-class male pupils influence the content and delivery of their PE curriculum/PE lessons?
2. To what extent do PE teachers working in working-class schools structure and deliver their PE/school sport in response to the attitudes and behaviours of their male working-class pupils?
3. How do the broader social influences to which the lads have been exposed come to influence the ways in which they view and engage in leisure, education and view their future lives, and, to what extent are these issues linked?

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

The primary aim of this chapter is to provide an overview of the work of Norbert Elias and Pierre Bourdieu as it is the work of these two sociologists that will be used to make sense of the main findings in the study. Although, the application of two sociological approaches may be seen as relatively unconventional, not only are there distinct similarities between the two sociologists work but key concepts and aspects of each authors work is deemed to contribute equally to the findings in the study. Therefore, this chapter will initially highlight the common ground between the two before moving on to address the main and most relevant concepts of Elias and Bourdieu that came to be applied to the findings.

Elias and Bourdieu

The initial similarities that exist between the two academics not only relate to the fact that the two appear to have experienced a shared intellectual heritage (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) and a degree of 'intellectual sympathy for one another' (Dunning & Hughes, 2012: 188) but that both men wrote on a range of topics 'not normally addressed by major sociological theorists such as sport, art, leisure, and taste' (Dunning & Hughes, 2012: 188). It is also evident that Elias shared with Bourdieu an objection to the notion of a 'watertight separation between fact and value' (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992:48) and stressed the importance of maintaining a 'critical detachment and involvement' (Bourdieu & Wacquant,

1992: 55), with both also preferring to avoid a 'grand theory' approach to sociology in favour of presenting a coherent body of sociological insights (Jenkins, 2002).

Further similarities between the work of Elias and Bourdieu relate to the fact that Bourdieu's use of the term 'social field' looks superficially like a rough equivalent to Elias's use of the term figuration (Dunning & Hughes, 2012) whilst there are also consistent commonalities in the ways that both construct and use concepts of power and fields of power. However, perhaps the most obvious similarity between the works of the two sociologists concerns the concept of 'habitus', where some have identified a clear line of influence from Elias to Bourdieu (Pickel, 2005). Whilst there are many similarities between Bourdieu's conceptualization of habitus and that of Elias (see van Krieken, 1998), it is worth noting that Elias sought to move away from what he saw as the overemphasis Bourdieu placed upon bodily habitus in favor of a more generalized conception of habitus (van Krieken, 1998). More specifically, when using the term habitus, Elias referred to a person's 'second nature' or 'embodied social learning' that acts as an 'automatic, blindly functioning apparatus of self-control' (Elias, 2000: 368), whilst Bourdieu (1984, 1994) refers more specifically to the lifestyle, values, dispositions and expectations linked to particular social groups.

This chapter will now address these and other key concepts from the two academics, starting with the work of Norbert Elias.

Young people's lives and figural sociology

There has been evidence in the past that much of the research within sociology surrounding young people and 'youth' has focused either on youth transitions (Roberts, 1997, 2003) or cultural aspects such as lifestyles preferences (Miles, 2000, 2003). This has led, in many cases, to a dichotomy emerging in relation to society (the structure) and the individual (the agent). From a figural perspective at least, any study that is based

on the premise that 'society is made up of structures external to oneself the individual, and that the individual is at one and the same time surrounded but society yet cut off from it by some kind of barrier' (Elias, 1978: 121) prevents us from understanding adequately the full nature of social relationships. Therefore, any assumption that individuals can exist within society as separate from other people (Murphy, Sheard & Waddington, 2000) simply leads to the misconception that society exists independently of the human beings that constitute it. In relation to the study more specifically, it was evident then that the pupils and staff needed to be considered in relation to their interaction with one another, as well as the range of factors that have come to impact on their respective lives, such as parents, neighbours, friends and extended family members (e.g. grandparents).

The concept of a figuration, that is 'a structure of mutually orientated and dependent people' (Elias, 2000: 316) is the central concept in Eliasian sociology (Murphy et al., 2000). One can only understand the behaviour or actions of individual people by acknowledging 'their interdependence with the structure of their societies and the figurations that they form with each other' (Elias, 1978: 72) even if these exist as - non face-to-face relationships (Smith & Green, 2005) - such as the relationship of lads at ACS with one another as well as the school governors. As a result, the term figuration is intended to counter the notion that 'social agencies', 'institutions', and 'society' are entities that exist somehow separately from the people who comprise them' (Dunning & Hughes, 2012: 52).

Speaking against the notion of 'homo clausus' (closed personality), Elias (1994) suggested this should instead acknowledge the fact that:

the image of man as an open personality who possess a greater or lesser degree of relative (but never absolute and total) autonomy vis-avis other people and who is, in fact, fundamentally orientated toward and dependent on other people throughout his life. The network of interdependencies among human beings is what binds them together. Such interdependencies are the nexus of what is here called the figuration, in a structure of mutually orientated and dependent people. Since people are 'more or less dependent on each other first by nature and then through social learning, through education and socialisation, and socially generated reciprocal needs, they exist, one might venture to say, only as pluralities, only in figurations (Elias, 1978: 261)

Overall then, a key aspect of any research from a figural perspective should avoid viewing human beings simply as autonomous individuals (*homo clausus*), and instead acknowledge the fact that people are actually bonded together in complex networks of interdependencies (*homines aperti*) (Jarvie & Maguire, 1994), with all individuals existing in society 'as a human being among other human beings (Elias, 1978: 13).

For young people more specifically, and the lads at ACS in particular, the supposed 'individuality' of all lads can only then be understood in terms of the relationships to which they have been involved over time (e.g. parents). The lads in the study, therefore, can only be seen as a product of the interweaving and continuous interplay of these relationships with other people, (Goudsblom & Mennell, 1998). As a result, it is important to acknowledge that whilst each lad is still clearly a personality in his own right, this 'individual stamp' can only emerge from the history of the whole human network within which he has grown up and lives, as well as the complex interdependent relationships to which he is inextricably a part (Elias, 1987: 68). Therefore, the interweaving of humans, and specifically in this case, pupils, staff, parents, friends, family and neighbours, over a prolonged period of time, must be seen in relation to their autonomous functional interconnections (Elias 1978: 58-59). Importantly, these are not something that any of them have chosen, or that anyone has solely planned or created (Elias, 1994: 444), but instead, is simply a universal feature of social life (Dunning, 1999; Elias, 1978). As Elias (1987: 50) succinctly states, 'no individual, no matter how great his social stature, how powerful his will, how penetrating his intelligence, can breach the autonomous laws of the human network'. The following section will now examine the concept of figurations in more detail.

Figurations

Both generally, and in relation to the lads in the study more specifically, however, there are issues surrounding the complex interdependent figurations that need to be considered. Firstly, this relates to the dynamic and fluid nature (Murphy et al., 2000) of these social bonds which can only be understood if one acknowledges the 'perpetual growing up of individuals within a society' (Elias, 1987: 68) and in the case of the lads at ACS their progress through the education system. By extension, while this study was very much a snap-shot of contemporary school life at ACS and the current views and actions of its staff and pupils in particular, it is still important to acknowledge that human groups and societies (such as those involved in this study) are part of long-term processes of development and so are subject to change, rather than being 'timeless static states' (Elias, 1978: 112). Therefore, it is really only possible to trace and understand complex sociological issues and processes (such as the ones that emerge and influence the findings from this study) if the current views and actions of the people involved are viewed as the outcome of the long-term social processes of which they are all a part.

In addition to the points highlighted above, it is also important to consider that the interdependent relationships between any young people and the range of other people with which they have become interdependent (in all aspects of their lives), will become longer and more complex over time (Elias, 1978; Goudsblom & Mennell, 1998). As a result of this, as their webs of interdependence spread, and more people become involved in their social figuration (such as increasing amounts of staff and links to peers/friends), all young people will become increasingly compelled to give much greater consideration to the consequences of their own actions in relation to other interdependent individuals or groups (Mennell, 1998). Consequently, this also comes to impact on how they behave and respond in social situations. Ultimately then, the networks of interdependency in which pupils are involved during secondary school become longer and more complex (Murphy et al., 2000) which subsequently causes young people (and lads at ACS more specifically) to become

increasingly dependent upon, and interdependent with, a much greater range and number of people and groups (Goodwin & O'Connor, 2006) (e.g. school staff). These longer and more complex social figurations that the lads find themselves in as they progress through school (and life generally), not only lead to the chains of interdependence becoming more differentiated, but also result in the outcomes of these increasingly diverse and numerous social relationships becoming 'much more opaque' and difficult to control (Elias, 1978: 68). As this wider range of people (e.g. girls, peers, teachers) come to impact upon the lads' actions and behaviour in increasingly diverse ways, the lads themselves are increasingly less likely to be able to act and think independently as they may have been more inclined to do in their younger years. This is due to the fact that they become influenced and 'caught up' in the range of relationships and social pressures that adolescence inevitably brings.

One of the primary reasons for this decreasing autonomy relates to the varied and fluctuating power ratios (Elias, 1978: 15) between the range of interdependent people (Dunning & Hughes, 2012: 52) with which 'all human aims and actions intertwine' (Elias, 1978: 73). In relation to pupils within a school environment more specifically, this complex interrelated relationship with their immediate (e.g. friends) and broader social figurations (e.g. teachers and peers) can lead to consistent tension and contradictory actions. Whilst there is clearly a desire for the lads in the study to be seen as individuals in their own right in all aspects of their lives, and in the process develop a particular 'I' identity (Elias, 2001), this can only be achieved in relation to the range of 'other people occupying other positions in the web of relationship' (Elias, 1978: 124). Therefore, it is important to acknowledge in relation to the findings of this study, that whilst young people will still invest a great deal in order to assert their individuality and independence (Miles, 2000; 2003, Roberts, 1997; 1999) it is impossible for them to do this free from the complex network of interdependent relationships of which they are a part. As a result, what occurs in this context, is that young people are often still very much keen to 'stand out' but remain strongly influenced by the

social relationships of which that are a part. This leads to them developing their 'I' identities in very socially acceptable ways, such as remaining in school while consistently demonstrating disruptive behaviour in lessons. For the lads at ACS, therefore, their individual identities at school need to be consistently set in context with their wider social influences. Any splits between the lads whilst at school can never be seen in isolation from the long-term and diverse social relationships by which they continue to be influenced. In addition, it is also important to highlight the fact that whilst lads will be keen to create and develop individual identities outside of school and in the leisure time more specifically, how they do this is very much influenced by the constraining influence of social expectation, hence the dominance of recreational football in their lives. As a result, therefore, when young people (and the lads at ACS more specifically) develop their individual leisure identities (e.g. what they do in their spare time and how they act at school), these actions and attitudes are usually 'chosen' in relation to the direct and indirect influence of their friends, so that an acceptable 'balance' can be struck between individuality and acceptance within their group relationships (Miles, 2000). What generally occurs, therefore, is that individuals and young people aim to express their individual identity, but only in the socially acceptable spheres of certain leisure activities in order that they are more able and likely to 'fit in' with those around them whilst still remaining as individuals (Miles, Cliff & Burr, 1998). In the case of lads from ACS this came predominantly in the form of football. The leisure pursuits and more general actions and attitudes of the lads at ACS, therefore, must be viewed as unintended consequences of their interdependent relationships with a range of other people (e.g. friends, parents, peers, family) (Elias, 1978; Gouldsblom, 1977) that then leads to them being constrained or enabled in their actions and choices (Elias, 1978) to varying degrees. The following section will discuss how these figurations come to influence a person's habitus.

Habitus

From a figurational perspective, habitus refers to a person's embodied social learning that emerges as a result of the social relationships of which they are a part and leads to their 'automatic blindly functioning apparatus of self-control' (Elias, 2000: 368). Elias states that each person develops their own individual habits as well as a series of social habituses that are shared with others who have been habituated through similar experiences (Dunning, 2002). As a result, individuals take on a shared personality that 'grows out of the common language which the individual shares with others' (Elias, 1987: 182) but also develops a 'individual style' as a result of their shared experiences with others (Elias, 2000: 182). Viewed more specifically in relation to the lads from Ayrefield, the fact that Elias states that a person's habitus is primarily generated by the 'social relations in which an individual lives during his more impressionable phase' that 'imprints itself upon his (sic) unfolding personality' (Elias, 1994: 454) suggests that the actions and attitudes of the lads at ACS are very much products of their environment and that their current age is a very significant period in the formation of their habitus.

Despite this significance of childhood in the formation of a person's habitus, however, it is also worth highlighting that for Elias an individual's habitus continues to develop throughout their life. This is due to the fact 'although the self-steering of a person, malleable during childhood, solidifies and hardens as he grows up, it never ceases entirely to be affected by his changing relations with others throughout his life' (Elias, 1994: 455). Therefore, whilst the way in which an 'individual steers himself in his relations with others' is more likely to be developed during the more 'impressionable phase of a person's childhood and youth' leading, in turn, to similar actions, behaviours, tastes and habits (Elias, 1987: 454) the formation of habitus is a function of social interdependencies, which vary as the structure of a society varies (Elias, 1994, 2000). Consequently, it is important to acknowledge that whilst the behaviours and attitudes presented in the form of a habitus

by the lads at ACS have been formed as a result of the social (class) figurations of which individuals are a part, these subconscious outcomes still have the potential to fluctuate and develop, particularly given their 'malleable' age and the increasing range of number of people with which they will come into contact (e.g. girls and college tutors).

Power relationships

In the first instance, Elias is keen to acknowledge that power is 'not something that can be possessed solely by one person' (1978: 74) within any social relationship, as well as the fact that people can only be *in* possession of power, rather than actually possessing *it* in the traditional sense (Elias, 1978). As a result, 'no one individual is ever absolutely powerful or powerless' (Murphy et al., 2000: 93) within any social figuration of which they are a part.

In addition, Elias (1978) is also keen to stress that any balance or ratio of power should not be seen as a one-way process but instead one must acknowledge that all power relationships are in fact reciprocal in nature (Elias, 2001). More specifically, whilst certain individuals will often possess greater degrees of power that regularly enables them to constrain the actions of others (e.g. teachers over pupils), there is always scope for the seemingly 'less powerful' in any relationship to constrain the more powerful in what Elias refers to as a 'boomerang effect'. Therefore, 'in one form or another the constraints that more powerful groups exert on less powerful ones recoil on the former as constraints of the less powerful on the more powerful' (Elias, 1983: 265) in much the same way that a slave can influence the actions of the master (Elias, 1978) or the Y7 pupil can still constrain the actions of a teacher through his/her effort or behaviour in class. As an extension to this there is also scope for power relationships to change over time (van Krieken, 1998) and even 'to move to and fro' as the relationship progresses and develops (Elias, 1978: 131). Examples of this include the ratios of power that exist between a teacher and a Y7 pupil that could easily change markedly during a school day (e.g. assembly, form period, lunch time, class test) as well as when the pupil then moves through their school life (Y7 –Y11).

An additional consideration to make regarding power ratios also relates to the multi-polar (Elias, 1978) nature of most relationships. This is especially important given the fact that all individuals are involved in various power relationships involving a range of interdependent people in a variety of different ways (Dunning & Hughes, 2012: 67). As previously highlighted, as chains of interdependence become longer and more complex, this leads to patterns of multi-polar, ever-fluctuating influences among these wide-ranging inter-related groups (Dunning & Hughes, 2012). This not only leads to interdependent groups/individuals coming to depend on others in different ways, but also to 'people acting in a way that they would not act except under compulsion from other interdependent people (Elias, 1978: 94). In relation to the study more specifically, it was evident (to varying degrees) that the influence of parents, teachers, peers and even members of the opposite sex on the lads at ACS had compelled the lads to behave in differing and often 'unnatural' ways within the school environment which often changed and fluctuated throughout the school day. For Elias, therefore, it is clear that an individual's dependence on another is always closely connected and reciprocal in nature. Also, it is important to acknowledge that this relationship must be set in context with the range of socially bound power relationships that make up the broader figuration (e.g. peers, college tutors, parents, friendship groups), whilst also acknowledging the ever fluctuating and long-term nature of such relationships. For Elias (1978), it is only in this context that an individual's attitude and behaviour can be truly understood and explained, and the concept of game model relates closely to this.

Game Model

In relation to the fluctuating and increasingly complex ratios and relations of power evident in the every day lives of the lads at ACS, Elias's (1978) game model emerges as a relevant way of highlighting the ways in which interdependency ties inescapably constrain the lads

to a greater or lesser extent. More specifically, for Elias the use of people playing a game provides an ideal metaphor for 'people forming societies together' (1978: 92). This is not only due to the fact that a game matches the dependency of a player on the intentions and actions of his/her team-mates, but also demonstrates how opponents inevitably come to influence the player's/individuals own intentions and actions (Green, 2000). In addition to this, Elias also extends this analogy by observing that '(b)eing interdependent with so many people will very probably compel individual people to act in a way they would not act except under compulsion' (Elias, 1978: 94). Elias suggests here then that the interdependent relationships that exist within a game have the potential to 'show how the web of human relations changes when the distribution of power changes' (Elias, 1978: 80), as well as 'how power-ratios influence the extent to which the moves of one person or group can influence, if not quite determine, the moves of another, as well as the final outcome' (Green, 2000: 183). Overall, therefore, game model seems to suit the nature and structure of the school environment at ACS in the sense that multi-player and multi-level games can be used to simulate and gain a greater understanding of the multi-dimensional workings that exist in the school environment. This is relevant not only in relation to the inescapable bonds that exist between all the lads, teachers, parents and peers, but also the fact that most lads at ACS ostensibly 'see themselves as belonging to one side or another' (Green, 2000: 183) such as the level of conformity that they exercise in the school environment.

Functional democratization

An additional concept of Elias' work that relates to power relationships and ratios highlights the fact that power differentials between a range of social groups have become increasingly reduced between previously dichotomous groups (e.g. men and women), a process referred to by Elias (1978) as 'functional democratization'. When applied to this study, the

power differentials between the lads at ACS and the respective adults in their lives (e.g. parents, teachers) meant that the two groups were evidently much 'closer together' leading to types and levels of interaction that would not have been the case in previous generations. As a result of this equalling out of power ratios between adults and children, an increasingly common feature of relationships between young people and adults generally (and the lads from Ayefield and their teachers/parents) is one of negotiation rather than direction and prohibition (Mennell, 1998; Kilminster, 1998). A sense of democracy is much more apparent and relevant, therefore, in the relationships between these two groups, as well as a decline in the inequality between them (van Krieken, 1998: 156) that would previously have led to clear and strong degrees of control being exercised by adults. Whilst there is no suggestion that the power balances between the lads at ACS and their parents and teachers is in any way 'equal', it is evident that such relationships are certainly much more equal than in previous generations. This has resulted in parents and teachers having a much greater regard for the feelings and welfare of children in their own right (Gouldsblom & Mennell, 1998) although this can lead to a 'peculiar paradox and a situation which is not at all easy for many adults to manage' (Gouldsblom & Mennell, 1998: 191), especially as direct control and discipline has become socially unacceptable and even, in some cases, obsolete.

Whilst much of Elias's discussion in this area refers directly to the relationships between children and their parents, much of the same could be applied to that of the lads at ACS and their teachers. The degree of authority from teachers that has long been 'understood' and accepted by both parties (Gouldsblom & Mennell, 1998) has evidently become increasingly much more 'democratic' and subsequently more difficult to define across school. Ultimately, there has emerged a more general informalisation of relations between adults and children (van Krieken, 1998) where communication, control and social relationships between the two previously more dichotomous groups have become based

on negotiation, dialogue and greater degrees of equality. Examples include the ways in which lads at ACS interact with their teachers before and during lessons, as well as how they are able to influence the nature and content of their PE lessons.

Established and outsiders

Another key aspect of Elias's work that relates closely to the focus and findings of this study is the concept of the 'established and outsiders'. These terms emerged from studies based on social groups who were inextricably linked by close functional interdependencies (van Krieken, 1998) within a small Leicestershire village (Elias & Scotson, 2008). The varying and fluctuating figurations and interdependencies that existed between the human beings within these communities subsequently led Elias and Scotson (2008) to coin the terms 'established' and 'outsiders' as a more accurate way of capturing the reality of day to day 'power relations and interdependencies within communities' (van Krieken, 1993: 147) that appeared to lead to a strong dominance of the former over the latter. In this regard, it was clear that an established group held much of the power over a group of relative 'outsiders', and while exploring the reasons behind this, Elias and Scotson (2008) found that, although the established and the outsiders were near enough identical in terms of all conventional indices of social stratification (Dunning & Hughes, 2012), the relative power and dominance of the 'established' group over the outsiders was based purely on the fact that the 'established' group had lived in the community for generations, whilst the outsiders were relative newcomers (Elias & Scotson, 2008). The figural dynamics between the established and the outsiders, 'that would normally be encountered between groups that differed along national, ethnic, or class lines' (Elias & Scotson, 2008: 17) were not as a result of any obvious physical, cultural or linguistic differences, but solely with regard to differences between residents in terms of how 'established' they were within the community (Dunning & Hughes, 2012: 63-64). More specifically, 'the greater levels of

internal cohesion and communal control' between the existing 'established' group as a result of their long-term attachment to the area, appeared to have played a decisive part in their greater power in their interdependent relationship with the outsiders (Elias & Scotson, 2008:4). The fact that the established group had lived in the area for two or three generations, had led the outsiders in the village to be viewed negatively as a stigmatized and inferior group and subsequently 'shut-out' as the established group utilised their relative power to close ranks (van Krieken, 1998). The relevance of this aspect of Elias' work to the study becomes particularly relevant in relation to the fact that the lads' link to ACS and Ayrefield has existed for many generations, whilst the social background and time spent at ACS by many teachers may feasibly lead the lads (and their parents to some degree) to see members of staff as 'outsiders'. The cohesion and 'we' identity felt by many members of the local community, therefore, did seem to have the potential to stand at odds with that of school staff. The remainder of the chapter will now consider the main aspects of Pierre Bourdieu's work that relate to the study starting with theme of habitus.

Pierre Bourdieu

Habitus

Suggestions have been made that Bourdieu gives little detail about how a person's habitus develops (Bernstein, 1990; Noble & Watkins, 2003). However, the term is used by Bourdieu (1984,1990) to describe how the life-long social conditions to which people are exposed (especially in childhood) (Bourdieu, 1984; Wacquant, 2006) causes individuals to be 'endowed with the habitus' (Bourdieu, 1993: 72) that manifest in a person's actions, appearance, ways of moving and talking, ideals, beliefs, attitudes, tastes and inclinations (Bourdieu, 1984, 1990; Hay & MacDonald, 2010; Wacquant, 2006). In relation to this more specific focus on aspects of taste, inclination and appearance, Bourdieu's concept of habitus (compared to that of Elias) is more focused on 'embodied sensibility' (Calhoun,

1998) that relates to how cultural 'learning, refining, recognising, (and) recalling' (Jarvie & Maguire, 1994: 186) becomes manifested through the development of individual 'tastes', choices and lifestyles (Laberge, 1995) and leads to a person's habitus emerging as a corporeal physical embodiment (Jarvie & Maguire, 1994) of their long-term social experiences and relationships. Ultimately, however, despite this distinct difference for the Elias' view of habitus, it remains the case that when 'people [are] subject to similar experiences' (Wacquant, 1998: 221) they also come to share a correspondingly similar habitus (Quarmby & Dagkas, 2012; Stuij, 2013). Therefore, as people's tastes have been described as the 'conscious manifestation of habitus' (Shilling 1993: 129), the concept of habitus emerges as important in understanding and explaining people's orientations generally (Shilling, 1993) as well the ways in which the lads at ACS held particular dispositions towards school, education and physical activity/sports participation, or indeed, their involvement in physical activity per se (Quarmby & Dagkas, 2012). However, within the context of this study, and the school environment more specifically, it is also important to highlight a person's habitus as an 'open system of dispositions' (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 2002: 133) that, whilst not easily changed, will structure but not consistently determine a person's social action (Bourdieu, 1984). Bourdieu (as with Elias) is keen to highlight the fact that a person's habitus is very much enduring yet not totally determining of their actions through life, and in relation to this study this emerged as an important feature in considering the strong similarities and sometimes stark differences between the lads at ACS.

Impact of habitus on sporting preference and lifestyles

Understanding a person's habitus in relation to sport/PA involvement is important due to the apparent link between the sports practices of young children and their subsequent behaviour throughout life (Telama et al., 2005; Thompson, Humbert, & Mirwald, 2003). Therefore, an individual's sport habitus that emerges from a person's social interactions with others during childhood, becomes a relevant and significant concept in understanding

the sporting 'choices' and preferences of those from different social class groups. In early childhood especially, the attitudes, actions, and social contacts of parents can not only influence their children's sports skills and knowledge (Bourdieu, 1984; Pot et al., 2014; Quarmby & Dagkas, 2012; Wheeler, 2012) but also their socio-cultural involvement with sports clubs and their members (Green, Thurston, Vaage, & Roberts, 2013; Jakobsson et al., 2012; Light et al., 2013; Nielsen et al., 2012; Stuij, 2013). This social influence also comes to impact upon the likelihood of an individual feeling a 'sense of place' and acceptance in some sports/environments (e.g. football in park with friends) or feeling that other activities (commitment to a hockey club) is simply 'not for the likes of them' (Bourdieu, 1984: 471). In relation to the differences between those from different social class backgrounds and therefore the lads at ACS more specifically, it has been stated that the sporting habitus of those from higher social class groups is more likely to be formed and developed as a result of direct influences and interactions with their family towards involvement in organized sport. In contrast, those from working-class backgrounds develop a sporting habitus that results from a greater influence of the interactions with friends, peers and siblings, such as the prominence of playing outside, recreationally with friends (Stuij, 2013). It does seem important to highlight, however, that despite the differing influences and sporting habitus of young people from differing social class backgrounds in their early lives, several studies have found that as children enter secondary education, young people from all social class groups become much more influenced by their friends and peers (rather than their parents) in the types and range of sports and activities that they choose to participate in (Allender et al., 2006; Bourdieu, 1984; Devís-Devís et al., 2013; Haycock & Smith, 2011; Zeijl, Poel, Bois-Reymond, Ravensloot, & Meulman, 2000).

Capital

Bourdieu's definition of capital is wide ranging and not only includes material things such as financial income and property, but also 'untouchable' and culturally significant attributes (Harker, Mahar & Wilkes, 1990) that are 'transformed and exchanged within complex networks and across different fields' (Calhoun & Jenkins, 1994: 102). For Bourdieu, capital acts as a social relation within a system of exchange, and the term is extended 'to all the goods, material and symbolic, without distinction, that present themselves as rare and worthy of being sought after in a particular social formation' (Harker et al., 1990 cited in Webb, Schirato, & Danaher, 2005: 22). In this sense, therefore, for Bourdieu, power and dominance derive not only from the possession of material resources such as property or cash, but also from possession of cultural and social resources such as qualifications, friends, occupations and interests (Crossley, 2012). In the case of the lads within the study, therefore, the possession of differing types and levels of capital is not straightforward for the lads at ACS (e.g. how much money their parents earn) but also relates to a wide range of non-tangible 'resources' such as an ability to fight, wearing the 'right' clothing, or being part of a family that is 'known' around Ayrefield.

In first instance, the rich, for example, find themselves with wealth that is weighted in the direction of finances or assets that deems them 'rich' in economic capital. However, social stratification has become more complex, due in part to the expansion of education and increased significance of qualifications, which has rendered an exclusive focus upon economic capital problematic (Crossley, 2012). Consequently, other forms of capital need to be utilised for a more accurate and relevant distinction to occur. Therefore, in relation to this, social capital also emerges as a key concept for Bourdieu (1972, 1973, 1984), and though less clearly defined, refers specifically to a person's 'investment' in social relationships with other people and the way in which people can draw upon these social ties with other people, often for their own gain (e.g. childcare, club membership, university places). The third main key concept in this area is that of cultural capital, which is again

often more difficult to quantify and identify compared to economic capital, but relates to an individual's skills, knowledge, values and actions that they 'acquire' (Bourdieu, 1984; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Roberts, 2001) as part of early socialisation experiences within particular social networks (Kew, 1997 cited in Green, 2008). This form of capital is often built up gradually and is generally transmitted down through generations of families (Gunn, 2005, Roberts, 2011) via the process of socialisation. Cultural capital also then comes to strongly influence (amongst other things) what individuals enjoy doing, eating, and participating in, as well as how these actions and choices are viewed by both themselves and others in their peer group or community (e.g. going to the opera). Therefore, in relation to this study, what the lads at ACS 'choose' to do and how this is then viewed by those surrounding them, is a strong indication of the type of social background from which these lads have emerged and consequently provides a source of distinction between the lads from Ayrefield and males pupils of a similar age from differing backgrounds.

In relation to the state of capital and the subsequent capital portfolios of individual people, Bourdieu (1984) is keen to highlight the fact that the possession of capital is never static. Instead he highlights that this is a dynamic concept in which individuals and groups utilise a range of resources in their dealings with others and it is these 'resources' that come to impact upon social relationships with other individuals and groups (Bourdieu, 1984) such as the lads' ability to fight, play football or do well in examinations. In this regard, it is also possible to switch these 'assets' from one form of capital to another over time. For example, Bourdieu (1984: 137) uses the example of the cash rich paying for private education in order to improve the social status of their heirs via the creation and development of their social, cultural capital via the 'reconversion of economic capital'.

Before this chapter moves on to look at the additional forms of capital that come to influence the findings of this study more specifically, an examination of Bourdieu's concepts of field and which will be included.

Social Field and Doxa

Bourdieu's concept of a field of power (similar to that of Elias) attempts to provide a metaphor for the ways in which cultural fields actually conduct themselves and how individuals and institutions in dominant fields (e.g. government) relate to one another within the context of the whole social field (Webb et al., 2005). Whilst the 'field of power' for Bourdieu operates more specifically as a configuration of capital (economic, cultural and symbolic) that shapes relations and practices within these fields (Webb et al., 2005), there are certainly some similarities between Bourdieu's 'fields of power' and Elias's interdependent social figurations, namely the ratios and balances of power within these. In addition to this, both concepts are strongly underpinned by the possession of power by both individuals and groups who are inextricably linked to one another.

In relation to the two previous sections, therefore, Bourdieu (1990) is keen to highlight that one's habitus and possession of capital does not exist and function except in relation to a particular social 'field' (Bourdieu, 1990). According to Hay (2005: 46) 'a field is a site in which the boundaries and internal social structures of that context are defined by sets of rules, guidelines, expectations and values' with some of these being overt, such as school rules or laws, while others are less overt 'but no less powerful [in their] influences' (Hay & MacDonald, 2010: 4) such as what is deemed 'acceptable' for a 'lad from Ayrefield' to do in his leisure time by his family/friends. Given the fact that fields relate closely to existing social structures and relationships, therefore, they are viewed as sites of cultural reproduction where particular norms and boundaries exist for members of that field and where certain behaviours, actions, and attitudes are favored and reproduced within it

(Bourdieu, 1984,1986a). This may well be the family-based social field that nurtures physical activity tastes, preferences and interests (Quarmby & Dagkas 2010, 2012) or the expectations placed on many lads at ACS by peers and friends regarding how they behave at school and what they 'choose' to do in the free time.

When the concept of social field is made more specific to family units or even specific groups such as the lads groups at ACS, for Bourdieu (1990), those that occupy such a specific and often close-knit social field such as this come to share a very similar habitus and tend to reproduce a particular culture, lifestyle, and set of beliefs between themselves through practice (Bourdieu, 1985, 1989). In relation to this, the term of doxa emerges as a concept that helps further explain the cultural norms and habitus of those from different groups (e.g. Problematics) and social class backgrounds.

In the first instance the term doxa refers to the commonplace values and beliefs, unquestioned opinions and perceptions permeating a given field that determine natural practice and attitudes (Bourdieu, 1990). This is created when the habitus of a group (wider family or Problematics) or an individual (parent or 'prominent' lad) who possesses a particularly high degree of symbolic power/capital (Atkinson, 2011) causes others within that field to share similar doxic experiences and also to adopt similar values and beliefs. For example, even a lone-parent family or a dominant member of a lads group, can generate specific doxa among the other members of the group/family that leads to shared views on a range of issues such as where the family prefer to go on holiday and do at weekends (Quarmby & Dagkas, 2012) or how a group such as the Problematics behave in classroom-based lessons or prefer to do in PE. Therefore, as the power of the doxa is strengthened by the mutual reinforcement between field and habitus over time, individuals come to feel most comfortable in fields in which our habitus has been formed and so adopt the 'common' behaviours and attitudes of those around them (Bourdieu, 1989). Conversely this process can also cause people to feel like 'fish out of water' in certain social situations

that do not match the habitus and doxa to which they have become accustomed (Quarmby & Dagkas, 2012). In relation to the aims and findings of the study more specifically, therefore, it seems that this process of social field reproduction and doxa can be used to explain and examine the ways in which the lads at ACS generate their leisure interests and participation generally as well as how they come to engage in education/school and influence their PE experiences and negotiate the nature of their PE lessons as part of their more specific lads groups.

When the formation and reinforcement of particular forms of capital is applied to social class groups more specifically, Bourdieu's (1984) concept of symbolic capital becomes especially relevant, especially given the strong working-class environment that was evident in Ayrefield. The reason for this is that the concept of symbolic capital considers the ways in which others view and value other people's types and levels of economic, social, and cultural capital as being socially valuable or legitimate (Bourdieu, 1989, 1986b). As a result, symbolic capital not only emerges from the conversion of other forms of capital (Southerton, 2011), but it should also be seen as something that cannot be earned on an individual basis and may fluctuate widely between members in a community (Bourdieu, 1984). For example, new found financial wealth does not always lead to an 'acceptance' amongst the more culturally or socially 'wealthy' members of a society (Bourdieu, 1984), while among other social groups (such as the working-class community of Ayrefield) academic qualifications may be seen as inferior to an ability to engage in manual work ('graft'), or an ability to play football for the lads at ACS. If extended towards Ayrefield and ACS specifically, therefore, it is plausible to suggest that certain lads could possess high levels of socially valued and legitimised traits and abilities (e.g. fighting) that subsequently emerge in the form of symbolic capital, where more quantifiable and more socially valued assets in the form economic capital (income), job (social capital), or

qualifications (cultural) may (in relative terms) be very low, especially among the more Problematic lads.

Physical Capital

A further aspect of capital added by Bourdieu (1984) with particular relevance to this study is the concept of physical capital. This relates not only to the skills and physical attributes that a person possesses, but also considers the ways in which an individual is able/willing to develop and improve their body, physical capabilities, and skills (Hill, 2013). As an extension to this, Shilling (1993) describes how physical capital has become increasingly significant aspect of modern life, not least because the possession of physical capital can be converted into other forms of capital such as economic capital as a result of utilizing physical strength as a means to gain employment as a manual laborer or pursuing a career in professional sport. The production, possession, and value of physical capital are influenced by its recognition within a/the social field (Shilling, 1993), which is particularly relevant for lads from the working-class area of Ayrefield as well as the school environment of ACS more specifically. The term physical capital, therefore, is used as a way of not only referring to a person's actions, knowledge and skills, but also the ways in which these attributes are viewed and valued across a range of different situations and environments (Bourdieu, 1984; Salter, 2003; Shilling, 1993). For example, 'physical' skills such as the ability to work as a site laborer and/or the ability to fight, are more likely to be viewed more positively in a social field such as Ayrefield (and to some extent ACS) that values or normalises displays of physical capital related to the aggressive, physical, and overtly masculine nature of many working-class communities (Dunning, Murphy, & Williams, 1988). However, for Bourdieu (1984) the body in modern societies has become a source of 'physical capital' that has considerable exchange value beyond that associated with the ability to do physical work (Hill, 2013). Therefore, physical capital is not only an embodied

capacity to use the body, but also a visual guide to one's attitude towards, and willingness to work on their body (Bourdieu, 1984). The concept of physical capital can also be extended to consider how all individuals, and those from different social class groups more specifically, view and treat their bodies. It has also been suggested that people from differing social class groups often treat and view their bodies (Shilling, 2003) in very different ways, with members of the middle-class thought to be more likely to view their bodies as a 'project' to be mastered and developed (Bourdieu, 1978: 838) as apposed to the working-classes who are deemed more likely to develop an instrumental and pragmatic relationship with their bodies (Shilling, 2003) such as the favouring of such as the favouring of muscular physiques over the long-term benefits of a healthy lifestyle. As a result, for Bourdieu (1984: 193), the physical make up, appearance, and attitude towards one's own body can often reveal 'the deepest dispositions of the habitus...that tends to reproduce...the social structure'.

Physical capital and PE

In relation to the issues highlighted above, the development of physical capital can be broadly split between 'bodywork' (Armour, 1999) where, for example, musculature is developed through exercise, and skill-related competence such as an ability to throw or catch (Hill, 2013). By extension, Bourdieu (1984) also states that it is this physical capital and the way it is viewed by prominent members of the field (e.g. PE teachers or peers) that leads to individual bodies becoming valued and/or gaining value in PE - or not as the case may be. It is often the ways in which certain abilities are promoted and valued within their particular social fields, therefore, that emerges as significant and in this sense the 'right' skills and abilities must be demonstrated in order to use these 'resources' to gain value in the field (Edwards & Imrie, 2003). For young males, such as those as ACS, it has been stated that young males become aware of the fact that they must develop a strong and

skilled body to have status not only as a sporting body but also as a boy (Swain, 2003) within their working-class communities. Therefore, because male pupils are aware that developing and displaying the 'right' forms of physical capital can lead to status and symbolic capital among their peers, (Redelius et al., 2009; Shilling, 1991, 2003) body work and developing physical capital becomes significant to many young males (Bourdieu, 1990). When physical capital and social field are considered in greater detail, Hill (2013) states that bodies and dispositions linked to certain activities (football, weight training) can have more value than others, and so ability in certain sports can be 'tradable' for peer respect. Therefore, for the majority of lads at ACS, decisions about when and how to engage in, and negotiate their PE lessons becomes complex (Hill, 2013). This is due to their awareness that becoming (and remaining) competent, strong and/or fit, not only has the potential to lead to symbolic capital and status, but that this physical ability can be exchanged 'off the pitch' for social capital (Hunter, 2004; Sparkes, Partington, & Brown, 2007; Swain, 2003) and/or popularity and respect (Hill, 2013; Portman, 1995). For the lads at ACS, the 'right' kinds of sporting abilities (e.g. strength, speed) in the 'right' kinds of sports (football) emerge as being particularly important and 'valuable' due to the status such ability/capital can bring them in PE, around school, and even in Ayrefield more generally. As a result, therefore, for lads like those at ACS especially, what they are able (or not) to do in PE becomes a prominent and significant issue, not least because the perception of what masculine sporting bodies should be is enhanced and promoted via an increased culture of surveillance, performance, and assessment in PE (Evans, Rich, Davies, & Allwood, 2008; Rich & Evans, 2011; Shilling, 2010).

In response to this awareness among many young males regarding the importance of valued ability and capital, physical activity choice and engagement has been shown to be influenced by what males feel that their socially constructed 'bodies' and physical abilities could be used for in order to gain value in their specific field/school environment.

As most of a person's level and type of physical capital emerges from the social background, therefore, Lee et al (2009) suggest that demonstrating abilities across differing activities, especially for working-class males, can lead to varying degrees of status and recognition. This then subsequently leads to these males preferring certain activity choices over others due to their value in the social field (e.g. ACS lads' preference for competitive football in PE). In relation to this, it has been stated that even those who are unable to demonstrate socially valuable levels and types of physical capital can be complicit in this process due to the fact that they indicate a strong imperative to invest in a muscular, competent, or fit body in order to gain physical capital, value, and status among their social group (Hill, 2013)

Implications of physical capital, ability and PE

It is apparent that the concepts of ability and physical capital are inextricably linked, particularly when a consideration is made regarding the narrow view of ability in the field of PE and the working-class background of lads from ACS. It has already been stated in a previous chapter that some authors have highlighted a narrow interpretation of ability in the field of PE that values and promotes physical and competitive behaviours and traits and it has been stated above that developing the 'right' physical capital at school is important. However, it must be stated that the increasingly narrow interpretations of ability in PE that promotes and values specific physical abilities such as aggressive physicality at the expense of alternative forms of physical, cultural and social abilities, such as leadership skills and aesthetic abilities leads to only a few students being able to match the dominant values of the field (Hay & Lisahunter, 2006). In relation to PE at ACS, various authors suggest that although such a narrow concept and value of ability and physical capital in PE may mean that many young males have the opportunity to use and develop their abilities and physical capital in order to develop prestige and symbolic capital at school (and in PE). However, there is also the very real possibility that many other males will become

marginalized and even berated because they do not demonstrate abilities and types of physical capital in 'acceptable' activities such as football even though they might display a range of abilities in other activities or roles (e.g. coach, referee) (Hay, 2008). Therefore, the concept of physical capital that is interlinked with the ability in PE becomes relevant in this study due to the fact that the actual and potential abilities of numerous students are consistently overlooked in PE. This is often due to their abilities not matching the 'right' and valued physical capital, as well as the fact that the structure and delivery of PE does not afford many pupils the opportunity to demonstrate their 'alternative' forms of physical capital and the subsequently social 'benefits' that this may lead to.

Capital and Class

Whilst the various forms of capital highlighted and discussed above are 'possessed' by all individuals to varying degrees, a person's 'capital portfolio' is not always straightforward as highlighted previously in relation to the lads at ACS. Examples of this include anomalies such as artistic directors being high on cultural capital but relatively low on economic capital (Ley, 2003) and professional athletes being high in economic capital but low culturally speaking. In the case of Ayrefield, there was some evidence of some families being relatively cash rich, but culturally 'poor' in the ways that they choose to spend their time and money, such as some local business owners. In this regard, it is generally the case that many people in similar social class groups (and occupations) often possess very similar forms and levels of capital leading to particular groups not only earning the same salary, but having similar values, interests and pastimes (e.g. teachers). Therefore, issues such as where a person is born, the occupation and level of education of their parents, their leisure interests, and the specific social networks of which they are a part are all strongly linked to their ability to generate forms of cultural, social and ultimately economic capital, and also suggests that the capital portfolios of the residents of Ayrefield and the lads at ACS may well be very similar too.

The capital portfolios of individuals from similar social class groups are often very similar due to the commonality of their social relationships and backgrounds. The result of this is often that they are also then much more likely to interact and form relationships with one another due to the fact that they live in close proximity to one another, send their children to similar schools and, take part in similar socialising events (Crossley, 2012). Once again, it did seem that this was indeed the case in Ayrefield as the vast majority of lads parents seemed to have attended ACS and remained living in the local area. As an extension to this, it is also common that people from similar social class backgrounds whom possess very similar capital portfolios, also 'possess' very similar tastes, interests and attitudes (Wacquant, 1998) as a result of their similar occupations and lifestyles.

Capital, power and 'distinction' between social class groups

For Bourdieu (1972, 1973, 1984) the possession of varying degrees and types of capital between social class groups leads to the favouring of certain forms and levels of capital in society as well as increases the ability of those groups in possession of these favoured forms to possess a degree of power over others. More specifically, in Western societies, the middle-classes consistently enjoy a 'superior' relationship over the working-class due to the fact that their portfolios of capital are seen as being more highly formed and transposable (Crossley, 2012). This outcome not only enables the middle-classes to designate what 'authentic' capital actually is (Webb et al., 2005), but also to take advantage of the position of power that such a process provides. Ultimately, therefore, as certain forms of capital more synonymous with the middle-class become more valued and authenticated in society, the values, tastes and lifestyles of these more dominant social groups are elevated above those of others (Bourdieu, 1984). This then leads to a form of social advantage and a prominent sense of class distinction (Bourdieu, 1985). As a result, cultural differences are not only viewed as being 'higher' or 'lower' (e.g. horse racing compared to

greyhound racing), but it also allows differences and ultimately inequality between groups to appear natural, inevitable and just, with some social strata emerging as being to 'naturally' more cultured (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990) and subsequently superior (Crossley, 2012) to others. For those living in the working-class community of Ayrefield, therefore, a strong sense of awareness regarding their social class position often emerges that is based on the 'choices' they make such as what they wear, what they eat, and where they go on holiday.

Bourdieu and education

Academic Capital, dominant school culture and 'doxa'

The concept of academic capital refers to 'the combined effects of cultural transmission' on school-aged pupils through the influence of their family as well as that of the school itself (Bourdieu, 2004: 23). In relation to the influence of family background, middle-class families are much more likely to develop in their children the dominant culture expected at school (Webb et al., 2005) and higher levels of academic capital, compared to those parents indirectly involved in this study. In the first instance this may result from the economic advantage held by the middle-classes that is more likely to enable them to access 'bought in' or 'paid add-ons' such as private education, tutoring, and commercial educational services that promote the likelihood of children engaging in, and succeeding at, school. In addition, middle-class children are also increasingly likely to possess and develop greater degrees of academic capital as a result of the cultural resources at their disposal such as learning orientations, prevailing values, and parenting styles of their parents (Bourdieu, 1986). In short, it seems that the working-class families/parents of Ayrefield would be less inclined to engender attitudes and actions in their children such as reading recreationally, family discussion, and positive attitudes towards teachers and learning generally. Therefore, the greater forms of academic capital often more evident in

middle-class pupils emerges from the more comprehensive, deeply embedded cultural pattern (Lareau, 2003) of their parents who consistently and consciously engage in a process of 'deliberate inculcation' that involves energy, money, and emotional commitment being 'spent' on enhancing children's intellectual, physical, social and emotional development. Therefore, 'the maximum free time is harnessed to maximise the cultural capital' of their (middle-class) children (Bourdieu, 2004: 19) which is much less likely to be evident among working-class families such as those in Ayrefield. Instead, Bourdieu would suggest that working-class parents such as those of the lads at ACS would be more likely to apply an 'accomplishment of natural growth' approach, which involves providing for the physical needs of their children (e.g. clothes and food) rather than a conscious and proactive approach to providing 'additional activities' (Bodovski, 2010; Lareau, 2003) for their children.

When the deliberate parenting and cultivation of middle-class children by their parents is related to their time in/at school, Bourdieu (2004) suggests that such pupils are more able to express themselves confidently at school within the constraints of the formal school context especially when compared to their working-class pers. Therefore, this increased learning readiness (Ball, 2010) held by many middle-class pupils enables them to successfully engage at school and develop their academic capital, which subsequently increases their chances of educational achievement and 'success'. Middle-class students, therefore, are metaphorically (and literally in some cases) more able to "speak the same language" as the school and its teachers. This is primarily due to the 'set of durable dispositions' (Bourdieu, 1984) that have been created and promoted at home, which are often traits and actions that lads from Ayrefield lack as a direct result of their working-class background and upbringing.

As an extension to this, Bourdieu further suggests that the predisposition for middle-class pupils to succeed at school is further accentuated by the fact that the Western

education system confers legitimacy, prestige and value (symbolic capital) upon the culture of the middle-class (Bourdieu, 1971, 1973, 1974, 1984, 1994; Bourdieu & de Saint-Martin, 1974; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977) as part of a dominant culture that favours those from a middle-class background. As many middle-class students possess the 'code of the message' that suits the skills and prior knowledge that they have experienced that is not usually present among lads like those from Ayrefield. Therefore, according to Bourdieu, the Western education system attaches the highest value to legitimate tastes and those who are brought up with these legitimate tastes find it 'easier to succeed in the education system' (Bourdieu, 1973, 1974, Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977). Overall, therefore, because the success of all school education depends fundamentally on the education previously accomplished in the earliest years of life (Bourdieu, 1973, 1974), middle-class students have higher success at school because their sub-culture is closer to the dominant culture that is 'practiced' in schools. The concept of '*doxa*' is used to characterize the legitimisation of these particular attitudes and behaviours (Reed-Danahay, 2005) that, according to Bourdieu (1977) emerge as taken-for-granted, unquestioned truths in society. When the concept of '*doxa*' is applied to the Western education system more specifically, Bourdieu and Passeron (1979) state that it is the legitimatisation of certain attitudes and actions that leads many working-class pupils such as those at ACS to feel eliminated and out of place at school.

Pedagogic action and symbolic violence

In addition to the ways that middle-class pupils are seen to be more 'set-up' to succeed in a dominant school culture that suits their capital portfolio and habitus, Bourdieu and Passeron (1990) further suggest a process of pedagogic action is present in the Western education systems that 'encourages' students to accept the 'values and meanings of the existing order' as being both natural and legitimate (Webb et al., 2005: 120). Put more

simply, a process of 'symbolic violence...causes working-class children to internalize failures at school as having been caused by their own shortcomings' (Reed-Danahay, 2005: 49), as certain 'doxas' (regimes of truth) cause many working-class pupils to accept that certain options and achievements will not be open to them (e.g university) and even that they just 'not cut out for school' (Webb et al., 2005). Bourdieu, therefore, suggests that the majority of lads similar to those attending ACS are often unable to act in the expected way at school and are consequently led to believe that such an outcome is an inevitable consequence for many 'lads like them'.

It is in relation to this pedagogic action and symbolic violence present in schools, that Bourdieu suggests that many students such as those at ACS (and the Problematics in particular) may be more likely to rebel against schools and devote much of their school time, not to the formal curriculum but to disruptive behaviour. Bourdieu also suggests that such a tendency for working-class pupils to disengage from formal schooling is not only due to the pressure imposed on them to reproduce 'unnatural' values and behaviours at school, but also because they feel that their values and language styles that they are accustomed to use at home are devalued (Webb et al., 2005: 123). Therefore, it does seem apparent why the working-class 'sub-culture which, in its language, dress and modes of behaviour is consciously at odds with the cultivated official culture of the school' (Webb et al., 2005: 123), especially among groups such as the Problematics at ACS.

Overall, therefore, the issues and processes highlighted above led Bourdieu (1973, 1974) to conclude that social inequality is reproduced in the educational system and as a result is legitimated. This is due to the fact that the privileged position of the dominant classes is justified by educational success (and) the under-privileged position of the lower classes is legitimated by educational failure. As a result, Bourdieu states that the Western education system is particularly effective in maintaining the power of the dominant classes and as a result stands to reproduce the established order and social inequalities that exist

(Webb et al., 2005) in both education and broader society, This is a process that is acknowledged throughout the course of this study for lads at ACS

Heteronomous and autonomous poles

An additional area of Bourdieu's work in the field of education that has become increasingly prominent and relevant in recent years is the dichotomy between the *autonomous* field of education and the *heteronomous* (Bourdieu, 1993). Initially discussed in relation to higher education it does seem that for Bourdieu, the way in which education is undertaken by pupils/students and perhaps more importantly how education is viewed by schools, teachers and the Western education generally has come to relate to the key differences between the two terms. In relatively simple terms, the autonomous field of education is associated with attitudes to education that are committed to learning for its own sake and that schools are spaces for nurturing intellectual growth in supportive environment, whilst the heteronomous pole highlights more of a results driven, marketized approach (Webb et al., 2005). When these terms are applied to the contemporary Western education system, there is evidence to suggest that heteronomous forces are increasingly impinging on the field of schooling (Webb et al., 2005:108) as schools, teachers, head teachers and pupils become increasingly accountable to, and by, examination results and pupil progress (Ball, 2009) and the education system becomes more marketized. As a result, whilst autonomous values still clearly have a place in schooling (and vast majority of schools), the increasing move towards results led education means that heteronomous forces dominate. Subsequently, pupils are increasingly seen as commodities with increasing pressures to gain exam results (often for predominantly practical courses such as hair dressing and plastering) whilst teachers are forced to move between autonomous and heteronomous poles (Webb et al., 2005).

The primary aim of this chapter has been to provide a detailed summary of the work of Norbert Elias and Pierre Bourdieu that is deemed relevant to the aims and findings of the study. The content of this chapter will be utilised within the discussion chapter as a way of attempting to make sense of the key findings that emerged from the study as it is felt that the work of both sociologists can contribute to the explanation of the main findings and contextualise the main aspects of the data. The following chapter will examine and justify the methodology and structure of the data collection.

Chapter 4: Methodology and Methods

In order to examine the extent to which male, working-class pupils (lads) were able to influence and negotiate the content and delivery of their PE lessons it was important to consider the range of social relationships and influences to which the lads were a part. Therefore, as these social influences included direct and indirect relationships with friends, peers, family, teachers and neighbours both inside and outside the school environment, a case study approach was utilised so that multiple sources of data could be collated via a range of research methods (Yin, 2009) over an extended period of time. The aim of this chapter, therefore, is to provide a justification for the selection of the research design as

well as specific details regarding the procedural and ethical considerations made during the collation and interpretation of data.

Case Studies

Whilst the use of case studies has become widespread in social research (Denscombe, 2010) it is evident that for many authors, the definition and precise meaning of a case-study design remains rather ambiguous (Gomm, Hammersley & Foster, 2004; Merriam, 1988; Stake, 1995) meaning different things to different people across different disciplines (Simons, 2009). However, there does seem to be a general consensus that case-studies enable the researcher to explore a range of themes and subjects in a focused way within their natural context, whilst also attempting to attribute the causal relationships related to issues that emerge (Gray, 2004). Previously these have included examinations of specific communities (Gans, 1962; O'Reilly, 2000; Stacey, 1960), while schools have also been examined (Ball, 1981; Burgess, 1983; Willis, 1979), as well as families (Brannen & Nilsen, 2006; Lewis, 1961), and work place organisations (Callaghan & Thompson, 2002; Cavendish, 1982; Ditton, 1977; Holdaway, 1983; Nyberg, 2009). The case study, therefore, characteristically emphasises depth of study in a particular and 'natural' situation or environment. The aim here is to provide an in-depth account of the events, relationships, experiences, and social processes that are occurring in that particular instance (Bryman, 2012; Denscombe, 2010; Simons, 2009; Stake, 2009). In order to effectively examine this range of issues, a case study will often rely on multiple sources of data collated via a range of research methods (Yin, 2009). These are typically (i) participant observation, (ii) semi-structured and open interviews, and (iii) documentary analysis (Denscombe, 2010; Gray, 2004) which are used in conjunction in order to triangulate the data and address any issues surrounding construct validity (Gray, 2004). Case studies can 'prove invaluable in adding understanding, extending experience, and increasing conviction about a subject' (Gray,

2004: 123). This is due to the fact that researchers are able to document multiple perspectives, explore contested viewpoints, and demonstrate the influence of key actors whilst also providing an opportunity to explore and understand social processes as they unfold (Simons, 2009). In relation to this, the validity and major strength of case-study design is that the basis of the investigation is something that already exists with no controls on variables (Denscombe, 2010). The case is also not divorced from its context as it is studied as a 'naturally' occurring phenomenon (Yin, 2009) where the researcher has little control over events and the case that existed before the research will continue to exist once the research has finished (Denscombe, 2010; Rowley, 2002). Perhaps more importantly, case studies can also offer unique and often-spontaneous insights into organisations and the processes and relationships occurring within them, that are often impossible to achieve by using other approaches (Rowley, 2002). This is often useful when the researcher(s) are keen to attempt to answer the *how* and *why* questions as apposed the often more obvious *who*, *what*, and *where* questions (Gray, 2004; Rowley, 2002). This is because:

when a researcher takes the strategic decision to devote all his or her efforts to researching just one instance, there is obviously far greater opportunity to delve into things in more detail and discover things that might not have become apparent through more superficial research (Denscombe, 2010: 53)

This unique opportunity to be able to delve in to unique situations and processes also relates more specifically to the plethora of relationships and processes that occur, evolve, and develop within social settings. Overall, therefore, case studies 'can deal with the case as a whole, in its entirety, and thus have some chance of being able to discover how the many parts affect one another' (Denscombe, 2010: 53). This also means that the researcher can acknowledge the outcome and results whilst also focusing upon the relationships and social processes at work. For many authors, it is this opportunity to explain why certain outcomes might occur that proves to be the real value of case studies (Denscombe, 2010), particularly when compared to the survey approach.

The use of case studies in research does generate criticism, however, mainly due to the fact that the significant personal involvement of the researcher in the process brings into question a studies internal and external validity, reliability and bias (Denscombe, 2010; Gomm, Hammersely & Foster, 2000; Gray, 2004; Lieberman, 2000; Simons, 2009, Yin, 2009). Within case study literature, the importance of these factors differs depending on the extent to which they are deemed appropriate. For example, Yin (2009) mentions these areas in detail and suggests ways in which case study research can be developed by acknowledging them. However, Bryman (2012: 69) states that 'most writers of case studies with qualitative designs tend to play down or ignore the salience of these factors' citing the fact that Stake (1995) barely mentions these aspects of the research at all. Despite this, it is evident that these issues need to be acknowledged and addressed in all aspects of social research. In the first instance, internal validity is mainly a concern for more explanatory case studies when the researcher is attempting to explain how and why event x led to event y (Yin, 2009). However, this issue is only relevant to case studies in the sense that internal validity can become threatened if the researcher incorrectly concludes that there is a casual relationship between x and y without acknowledging that a third factor may well have led to y. Therefore, researchers must consistently ensure that incorrect inferences and spurious claims are not made based solely on causes and outcomes (Simons, 2009) by considering if all rival explanations and possibilities have been considered (Yin, 2014). Although achieving this result with the complex design of case study research is difficult, by consequently asking appropriate questions of themselves, Yin (2014) suggests that a researcher has at least attempted to address internal validity.

In relation to external validity, one of the standard criticisms of case study research is the fact that findings deriving from it cannot be generalised (Bryman, 2012) due to the obvious fact that case studies include, by definition, only a small number (or single) number of cases (e.g. single school or police force). In responses to these issues, it has also been

stated that formal generalising to other cases or populations is not the aim of case study research (nor should it be) (Bryman, 2012; Simons, 2009; Yin, 2009). External validity can be enhanced, however, by ensuring that the particular case has been selected as part of a detailed and genuine attempt to select a typical and representative case (Bryman, 2012). In addition to the issues relating to validity, the reliability of a case study design is also key in order to ensure that errors and biases in a study can be minimised and that any researcher following the same procedures at a later date would arrive at the same findings and conclusions (Gerring, 2007; Simons, 2009). To enhance the reliability of any case study design, therefore, the researcher should ensure that all procedures are documented in order that these could be used as a good guideline to repeat procedures and hopefully arrive at the same results (Simons, 2009). In order to enhance this reliability, the subject of bias is also an important factor to be acknowledged and addressed (Gerring, 2007). Although case study researchers are particularly prone to this problem (Simons, 2009) all findings will be negated if the researcher only seeks to use the case study to substantiate a preconceived position (Yin, 2014).

Finally, the concept of trustworthiness emerges as a key consideration in case study research and should be acknowledged throughout any such design. Although the term sits parallel to the traditional criteria of internal validity, external validity, and reliability, the concept of trustworthiness has been utilised during case study research in order to address the wider considerations that need to be consistently made in order for fair and accurate research to take place. These include credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability (Simons, 2009).

Types of case study

At this point it seems relevant to highlight the distinctions that can be made between different types of case, with four types of case study commonly utilised (Yin, 2009). Firstly,

the revelatory case provides the investigator with an 'opportunity to observe and analyse a previously inaccessible' case (Yin, 2009: 48) (see Liebow, 1967; Whyte, 1955). Secondly the extreme/unique case has previously included studies linked to the National Front (Fielding, 1982), and thirdly the critical case which enables the researcher to test a clear hypothesis that is based on a well-developed theory (Festinger et al., 1956). The final, and most common case study design is the representative/typical case that is chosen not because it is extreme or unusual in any way, but because it epitomizes a much broader range of cases and so are often termed representative, typical, or exemplifying cases (Bryman, 2012; Denscombe, 2010). This traditionally includes a detailed examination of 'the circumstances and conditions of an everyday or commonplace situation' (Yin, 2009: 48). The representative/typical case also provides a suitable context for certain research questions to be answered as well as an opportunity for the researcher 'to examine key social processes' as the greater depth and duration provides 'an apt context for working through research questions' (Bryman, 2012: 70).

Ethnography and case study research

The true meaning and focus of ethnographic research has been expanded to such an extent that it now encompasses an extremely wide range of methods (Gobo, 2011). As part of this, and due to the fact that ethnography and case studies rely heavily on participant observation, the two terms are often used interchangeably (Hammersley, 2006) causing many to view them as the same thing. However, although case study researchers do tend to follow ethnographic methods by providing detailed observations about reality, true ethnography has its roots in anthropology which is characterised by less-rigid and naturalistic form of inquiry conducted over an extended period of time (Hammersley, 2006). In doing so, the ethnographic researcher creates strong, long-term social relationships with the participants that lead to first-hand participant observations in a conscious attempt to

understand the complexity of people's beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors (Silverman, 2011). In contrast, case study is a term that emerged with ethnography to denote research that strategically uses more structured and diverse methods and data sources such as interviews, documentary analysis, and the use of audio-visual materials (Gobo, 2011). Although links relating to the use of participant observation between the two are evident, participant observation as part of a case study design often treats observation as a mere technique, while the term ethnography emphasizes the need to examine history and tradition by 'staying in their natural environment...in order to understand the meaning of their actions' (Gobo, 2011: 16-17). Therefore, although long-term participation of a particular type can be seen as ethnographically informed and influenced, it is important that a distinction between the two is made (Hammersley, 2011).

Choosing the case

As previously mentioned, it is important that cases are not randomly selected but instead selected on the basis of known attributes (Gomm et al., 2000; Gray, 2004). This immediately sets a case-study design out as being in stark contrast to the more randomized designs favoured with classic experiments (Denscombe, 2010). Clearly, in most cases (e.g. secondary school) the researcher will need to select one case as well as the unit of analysis from a range of possible alternatives (Rowley, 2002). This decision is made based upon identifying the key features that are measurable and quantifiable, such as the indices of social deprivation of the catchment area and/or the ethnic make-up of the student population. Subsequently, this will then form the basis from which any attempt can be made to generalise the findings to the wider population or society (if required) (Denscombe, 2010). In relation to the issue of reliability and generalizability, multiple cases are often preferred as they can be seen as almost equivalent to multiple experiments (Rowley, 2002). However, this is not always realistic or practical and given the decreased focus on the need for generalizability mentioned previously, one case is more often the preferred

choice and seen as sufficient for many researchers (Bryman, 2012). Ultimately, therefore, the case should be selected in relation to the specific research purpose and its suitability in providing a context in which to adequately and accurately explore the research question (Denscombe, 2010). In addition, more practical issues such as accessibility, financial and personal resources, and the time available are all important considerations to be acknowledged (Rowley, 2002). It is also important that cases are not selected purely for intrinsic and personal reasons (Simons, 2009).

Conducting Case Study Research

Participant Observation

Participant observation as a research method is thought to provide a uniquely humanistic, interpretative, and 'natural' approach to data collection (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1994; Yin, 2009). This generally occurs over a relatively sustained period, and involves watching, listening to, and asking questions of, people as they follow aspects of their day-to-day activities (Payne & Payne, 2004). In many cases, this observation often involves some form of interaction with the participants, and as a result, the researcher is generally required to adopt 'a variety of roles within a case-study design' and in some cases 'may actually participate in the events being studied' (Yin, 2009: 111). Whilst for practical and ethical reasons, participant observation is far more likely to be overt (where the role and aims of the researcher are open and much more transparent) (Bryman, 2012), decisions are not only made on a case by case basis, but can also change and evolve during the study of a particular case (see Adler & Adler, 1987; Gambetta & Hammill, 2005; Gans, 1968; Gold, 1958; Junker, 1960; Pearson, 2009; Swain, 2004; Venkatesh, 2008). The main benefit of conducting participant observation lies in the opportunity to gain access to groups that

would be otherwise inaccessible. This can then enable a more accurate portrayal and 'picture' of the group/case that is unlikely to be gained simply by speaking to people (Simons, 2009; Yin, 2009) as observing and analysing behaviours in particular contexts is often more reliable in ascertaining people's 'true' actions and attitudes (Buscatto, 2011; Gobo, 2011). The opportunity to observe participants in more 'natural' environments also enables the researcher to cross check any data that may have been acquired from other sources (such as interviews) and also provide an opportunity to capture the behaviours and experiences of groups who may be less articulate, such as children (Simons, 2009).

Types of participant observation

There are six broadly accepted approaches to participant observation, with all versions of this approach falling (more or less) under each type (Bryman, 2012). In the first instance, a covert full member will take on full membership of group by assuming a long-term role within an organisation or community so that the researcher's status as researcher is unknown (Denscombe, 2010). In most cases the researcher will either move into a community for a prolonged period and take on a pre-existing identity or take on the role of an employee in a group or organisation. Examples of such studies have included Person's (2009) study of football hooligans and Mattley's (2006) study of telephone sex workers. In contrast, the overt full member will make their status as a researcher known but the nature of their research will be the same as that of the covert full member with examples of this more open approach including Simakova's (2010) study of a large IT company and Hodgkinson's (2002) emersion in the Goth scene. The other four roles relate to the extent to which the observer participates in the group's core activities and can range from participating observer, through minimally participating observer, to non-participating observer with interaction. In relation to the first of these, the researcher will participate in the group's core activities by being regularly in the vicinity but not as a full member.

Examples of this include Foster's (1995) study of a London housing estate that involved participation in several aspects of community life (toddler groups) over a three-year period. As participation decreases (partial, minimal, non-participation) additional research methods are more likely to become the emphasis of data collection such as Fine's (1996) study of two restaurants that involved him acting as 'an extra pair of hands' when needed in the kitchen, but predominantly involved observation, note taking, and guided conversations with staff during working hours.

Limitations and ethical considerations with using participant observation

Perhaps the most significant and ethically contentious issue regarding the use of participant observation relates to the lack of informed consent linked to covert observation (Bryman, 2012). This is primarily due to the fact that the use of covert observation transgresses the core principle of any research that states that prospective research participants should be provided with all relevant information in order to enable them to make an informed decision about whether or not they should wish to participate in the study (Denscombe, 2010). Indeed the Social Research Association (SRA) guidelines (2003: 27) specifically state that 'inquiries involving human subjects should be based as far as practicable on freely given informed consent of subjects', while the British Sociological Association (BSA) guidelines (2002: 3) similarly state that 'as far as possible, participation in sociological research should be based on the freely given informed consent of those studied'. However, the focus of these guidelines is not to refute or even discount the use of covert observation within social research, especially when such research is more ethnographic in nature. Indeed, according to Bryman (2012) the BSA (2002) 'leaves the door ajar' for the use of covert observation, not only by the use of the term 'as far as possible' in relation to attaining participant consent, but by stating that such a data

collection method may be justified in certain circumstances. In relation to this (and the study itself), one of these circumstances pertains to any research situation where there is the very real threat of participants changing their behaviour because they know that they are being watched and analysed – such as pupils within a lesson/school environment. Although the BSA guidelines (2002: 4) state that all other research possibilities should be considered in order to obtain essential data before covert observation is utilised, they also suggest when it does make up part of the research design ‘it is important to safeguard the anonymity of research participants...where informed consent has not been obtained prior to the research’. Holdaway (1983: 63) utilised this approach when he felt that declaring himself a sociologist would prejudice the studies effectiveness when studying a religious sect’ (Holdaway, 1983: 63), while Pearson (2009) changed to covert observation when early attempts to use interview proved unreliable as football hooligans either played down or over-emphasised their involvement. Adding to this, Homan (1991) has also suggested that full participant consent during observation is almost impossible due to the fact that completely accurate information can never be guaranteed to any participant and may even prove extremely disruptive to the study.

An additional issue linked to covert observation relates to the ethical concerns surrounding deception when using this approach. Although the representation of work as something other than what it is understandably generates concern regarding ethics, Bryman (2012) suggests that deception in social research is widespread due to the fact that researchers often want to limit the participants understanding so that they respond more naturally. That is not to say that deception should be an aim of any genuine research but, as the ESRC Framework for Research Ethics (2015: 31) states, ‘deception should only be used as a last resort when no other approach is possible’. Finally, in relation to the practicalities of utilising covert observation in social research, it is important to highlight that any ‘active’ role in the group or community is predicated by the need for the researcher

to have the suitable credentials in order to become an accepted member of the group (e.g. age, gender) but should stop short of the researcher losing their sense of objectivity in the observation process (Homan, 1991).

More generally, concerns regarding the use of observation as a research method relate primarily to claims that the presence of any observer will almost inevitably influence the actions and/or interactions of the subjects being observed, particularly in the short-term (Bryman, 2012; McNaughton-Nicholls, Mills, & Kotecha, 2014). Whilst authors suggest that spending extended periods of time in such situations may reduce this impact, a key issue for any researcher conducting observations, therefore, is to acknowledge the impact that their presence is likely to have (McNaughton et al., 2014) and strive to minimise this over a period of time. In addition to this, researchers must also consider and determine what it is they are seeing, as well as how they are assessing their own response(s) to it (McNaughton et al., 2014). In this regard, some suggest that there is scope for researchers to interpret what they are seeing in a subjective and/or biased way due to the fact that such observations may well be influenced by the researcher's own attitudes and perceptions (Evans, 2012; Gobo, 2011). In this sense, any form of active observation can often be seen to 'lie at odds with what would usually be perceived as good social science practice' (Yin, 2009: 113).

Conducting participant observation

In some cases, the issues highlighted above relating to the observation of 'natural' behaviour can be addressed if the researcher is part of the group for long enough for trust and rapport to be gained (Evans, 2012). Prolonged interaction and observation with the subject group can lead to the researcher being more likely to observe 'natural' behaviour among the subject participants and may even enable them to distinguish the validity and trueness of peoples actions (Evans, 2012; Gellner & Hirsch, 2001).

Regarding what is actually observed, 'it is not only impossible but undesirable' for 'anything and everything' in the setting to be observed and recorded (May, 2011: 177) and as a result 'some selection has to be made' (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007: 144). In this regard, it is common for observations to remain relatively broad in the early stages of a research project, becoming increasingly specific and focused as the study progresses. In relation to the act of observation, energies often need to be devoted towards the pretence that the researcher is not really researching (Payne & Payne, 2004). Therefore, a degree of flexibility is paramount due to the fact that the degree to which observers participate will often vary (Cohen, Mannion, & Morrison, 2011; May, 2011) not only between studies, but also during specific cases. In relation to trying to ensure that any observations are viewed and then interpreted in a justifiable manner, it is important that researchers do not 'fall in to the trap of simply conforming to what they already know' (Simons, 2009: 57). In order to address these issues, researchers are advised to develop the ability to unlearn or challenge the 'normality' of their own lives (Evans, 2012). This may be difficult in the first instance, but will promote a more subjective and accurate interpretation of events, actions and responses.

In terms of making an attempt to accurately record and document any observation of participants and interpretations of the researcher (Bryman, 2012), the taking of field notes is an essential, but often difficult, part of the research process (Payne & Payne, 2004). In order to 'blend in' during this process, authors suggest that efforts must be made to mentally 'flag up' events as they happen in an attempt to aid the process of 'writing up' more formal notes later in the day (Bryman, 2012). Such notes should 'be as systematic and as comprehensive as possible' (Payne & Payne, 2004: 169), avoid being too selective so that the 'element of flexibility that is such a strength of qualitative research is not eroded' (Bryman, 2012: 448), and include personal reactions, ideas, and any analytical thoughts (Bryman, 2012).

Guided conversations

Interviews of this kind often occur informally and spontaneously, and are generally utilised in case studies in order to provide insights into people's attitudes/behaviours, or as a way of clarifying issues and incidents that have been observed during the course of the study (Yin, 2009). As a result of this spontaneity, and the fact that the researcher and participant are exposed to multi-sensory stimulation of the surrounding environment (Adams & Guy, 2007) questions are much more likely to be fluid rather than rigid (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). They are also more likely to relate to unforeseen situations or incidents that have emerged from the process of observation and can also be used to 'find out what is on and in someone's mind' (Patton, 1980: 196). There is also scope for the researcher to lead and engage in a flexible, two-way discussion on a topic or incident (Simons, 2009) in order to pursue emergent issue. This can often result in unobserved feelings and/or events being uncovered that would not have emerged in interview (Simons, 2009). In relation to promote this positive outcome, researchers suggest that the 'interviewer' needs to utilise a friendly and interactive approach (Kvale, 1996) and it is suggested that attempts must be made to equalize the relationship (Simons, 2009). This is often achieved by appearing non-threatening, even 'naïve' regarding the issue or incident whilst using 'how' as opposed to 'why' questions in a conversational style (Becker, 1998; Simons, 2009; Yin, 2009). Given the informal nature of these 'interviews' it is also important not to allow the interviewee to dominate and/or take the discussion off track (Simon, 2009) which is perhaps more common than would be the case in a more pre-planned interview format.

Limitations to guided conversations

One of the key issues to acknowledge with the use of such a research method is the fact that some of the more embodied characteristics of formal interviews are lost (Evans & Jones, 2011) when 'interviews' are conducted in an uncontrolled and often spontaneous

manner. As a result the formal capture of any dialogue is also almost impossible, which leads to difficulty in accurately recording both questions and responses and increases the likelihood of such responses being misinterpreted or forgotten (Bryman, 2012). In addition, due to the fact that questions emerge from spontaneous incidents, the researcher is often required to respond to issues and ask questions with very little notice within sensitive and emotionally charged situations (Hove & Anda, 2005). Not only can some incidents and subsequent responses to questions shock or surprise with very little warning (Bryman, 2012) therefore, but a lack of preparation time and relative subjectivity can increase the likelihood of using leading questions or pressing participants for answers where time may be limited (Yeo et al., 2014).

Focus Groups

In addition to the use of more spontaneous guided conversations, focus groups are a more structured and planned research method that is common within a case-study design (Yin, 2009). A focus group is a form of interview involving several participants during which, the specific focus on questioning by the researcher relates to more clearly defined topics and issues (Bryman, 2012). In terms of the make-up of the participants involved, most people selected to take part in focus groups have been involved in a particular situation or experience that is common to them all. Therefore, researchers can take advantage of being able to gain the views of several inter-related people at once, whilst also taking the opportunity to encourage people to expand on these views and opinions should the situation dictate. Perhaps the most unique and beneficial aspect of utilising focus groups, however, is the fact that the researcher is also only able to assess how 'people respond to each other's views' whilst also observing the levels and types of interaction taking place within the group (Bryman, 2012: 502). There is also a greater opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of people's responses in relation to how they have been constructed during everyday life (Wilkinson, 1998). Furthermore, participants have the opportunity to qualify

or modify their view or even 'to voice agreement to something that he or she would probably not have thought of without the opportunity of hearing the views of others' (Bryman, 2012: 503).

In relation to moderator involvement, the researcher should attempt to remain non-intrusive, facilitate the appropriate involvement of all participants, and ensure that all discussions remain relevant (Bryman, 2012). They should also remain aware of the likelihood that culturally expected views may be expressed in this environment - e.g. young boys views on relationships with girls (Morgan, 2002) - or be uncomfortable with the nature or focus of a particular topic area (Madriz, 2000). One of the main problems relating to the use of focus groups (especially with young people) is the relative lack of control that the researcher/moderator has over proceedings (Denscombe, 2008). Therefore, it is often difficult to ensure that participant responses are not influenced or constrained by the presence of others in the room (Bryman, 2012). In this sense, it is not uncommon for some individuals to suppress their responses, especially if they appear to be counter to the views of the rest of the group or potentially controversial (Finch, Lewis & Turley, 2014) or simply feel uncomfortable in each others' presence (Madriz, 2000; Morgan, 2002). Given all these issues, it also important to acknowledge the challenges that such groups can bring regarding the accurate transcription and interpretation of the data (Bloor, Frankland, Thomas, & Robson, 2001; Finch et al., 2014).

The socio-economic context for the study

It was immediately apparent that whilst the town in which the village of Ayrefield is situated could easily be described as being a socially deprived, white, working-class area, there was no real evidence of the extreme levels of poverty, violent crime or homelessness symptomatic of some similarly deprived areas of the UK. More specifically, whilst clearly deprived in relation to the rest of the county (ranked 5/26 in Yorkshire and Humberside – ONS, 2014), as well as the country as a whole (ranked 47/353, ONS), the town in which

the village of Ayrefield was located stood as the archetypal, white working-class area that had become the victim of mass de-industrialisation (MacDonald, 2008). In relation to this, there was a strong prevalence of 'white' people (98.9%) living in the town⁴ and the fact that the town's population, on average, earned less than £19,999 per year (ONS, 2014) and 11.1% of the population were unemployed (Liverpool 11.6%) (ONS, 2014) further support these strong assumptions.

For the area of Ayrefield more specifically, the prevalence of white-British residents remained high (1,330 from a total 1,389 residents) and the area immediately surrounding the school was one of the more deprived areas in the town when viewed both locally and in a national context (ranked 1,141 in terms of social deprivation out of a possible 32,482 areas, ONS, 2014). In addition, nearly a quarter of all residents in Ayrefield had no formal qualifications and twice the national average of residents were in 'bad' or 'very bad' health. Further to this, nearly two thirds of all households in the area were defined as deprived in either one or two of the four indicators of deprivation (e.g. one adult unemployed or no inhabitant has a level two qualification) (ONS, 2014)

However, as with the town more generally, demographic statistics for the lower super output area (LSOA) immediately surrounding the school did appear to generate a picture of a strong, working-class community. Initially this may seem difficult to evidence as 11.5% of current residents had either never worked or were classed as being long-term unemployed and over twice the national average (NA) of adults were currently claiming key working age benefits (36% with the NA being 15%) with almost three-times that number on incapacity benefit (20% with NA being 7%). However, there was also data to show that over 40% of adult residents were currently employed in either semi-routine or routine occupations, with some Ayrefield residents also classed in higher managerial (5.8%),

⁴ As a broad comparison the area of Tower Hamlets in London currently has a white British population of less than 50% (48.1%)

professional (10%) and intermediate (9.9%) occupations. When viewed in these terms, therefore, there was a great deal of evidence to suggest that the area of Ayrefield remained very much a cohesive and unified working-class area, at least culturally and socially speaking (Cannadine, 2000; Savage et al., 2004; Scott, 2006). However, it was also apparent that the disappearance of mining, in particular, within the area had meant that both males and females living in Ayrefield had become increasingly likely to take up (often part-time) employment within the service-dominated employment opportunities prevalent on the regenerated former pit sites (e.g. Next warehouse and Vodaphone call centre). Although the availability of routine and semi-routine employment in the local area had kept the majority of adults in some form of paid work, therefore, this was often part-time, temporary in nature, and seemingly led to relatively low levels of pay and job security (Felstead & Jewson, 1999; MacDonald, 2008; McDowell, 2001; Roberts, 2011).

In relation to sports participation and available facilities in and around Ayrefield, evidence also related closely to 'traditional' general working-class patterns, regarding what the residents do, how often, and where. Whilst sports participation (at least once a week) amongst adults 16 and over has increased by 1.7m nationally amongst the general population since 2005/6 to 35.5% (Sport England, 2015), the figures relating to Ayrefield and the surrounding area indicated a fall from a high of 35.0% in 2010 to 31.9% in 2014 (Sport England, 2015). In addition, sports participation of any kind (one session of sport of any duration in last 28 days) also followed a similar trend, with national figures increasing from 45.7% in 2006 to 48.0% in 2014 (Sport England, 2015), whilst figures for Ayrefield showed an overall fall between these years from an already lower than national average 42.4% in 2006 to 40.7% in 2014 (Sport England, 2015). On a more positive note, there had been a slight increase in participation for those actively and regularly involved in sport within Ayrefield from 15.1% in 2006, to 15.3% in 2014 (Sport England, 2015). However, this figure appeared to have been positively influenced by the male population (18.6% in

2006 to 20.3% in 2014), as the same measures for the female population actually fell (11.2% in 2006 to 10.5% in 2014) (Sport England, 2015).

Overall, therefore, any positive trends in participation appeared to be minimal and related closely to males who were actively and regularly involved in traditional working-class sports and lifestyle activities. More specifically, the top five participation sports in and around Ayrefield for 2014 (Swimming [9.9% - 11.5%], Cycling [7.5% - 8.1%], Football [7.3% - 6.3%], Gymnasium [6.9% - 10.9%] and Fitness and Conditioning [4.6% - 6.7%] were relatively class-related lifestyle activities, that all fell below the national average with the notable exception of football. One of the reasons for this may relate to the fact that the local authority had 5% of Yorkshire and Humberside's grass pitches (n=179) and was home to 28 football and 19 cricket clubs with a Sport England Clubmark. In contrast the town had no recognised indoor bowls facilities, tennis centres or ice rinks, only 1 tennis court, and no clubmark clubs in the sports of rowing, archery, equestrian, fencing, hockey, badminton, or golf.

The School – Ayrefield Community School (ACS)

The school itself was purposively selected following a detailed examination of the data relating to the area of Ayrefield set out above. It is important to reiterate at this stage that the study sought to focus upon a 'typical' mainstream secondary school made up of white, working-class pupils. Therefore, given the figures relating to indices of social deprivation, occupation trends, and the ethnic make up of residents in the immediate locality of the school, it was felt with some degree of confidence that the majority of pupils on roll at ACS matched this criterion due to the fact that almost all pupils lived in this locality. In relation to the white-British focus of the study, of the 965 pupils on roll at the school in 2013, only 1% of students considered their first language not to be English, with Ofsted (2012: 5) making note of the fact that 'most pupils were white British with a distinct lack of pupils from

ethnic minorities on roll'. With regards to the social-class of the pupils themselves, without specific data for specific pupils and their families, data on the school was accessed and utilised in order to ascertain with some degree of confidence that the vast majority of pupils came from 'traditional' working-class families. This data demonstrated that 45% of all pupils in Y11 at ACS were officially defined as being 'disadvantaged', and half (49.4%) of all pupils had been eligible for free school meals in the last six years. Although these figures officially place the school at a 'medium' level of deprivation, there was no indication during the study that a 'top half' of pupils existed at ACS that were far removed from the more social deprived half of pupils present in the school. By extension, and perhaps the most significant data regarding the social background of pupils at ACS, was the fact that 'the proportion of pupils for who the school receives Pupil Premium is well above national average' – with the figure standing at £558,259 in 2012 (Ofsted, 2012: 7).

Although not necessarily indicative of the type of pupils on roll at a school, ACS had received a grade of 'Inadequate – 4' in its last two Ofsted inspections and GCSE A*-C (including Maths and English) grades (30%) had not only led to them being placed in the bottom 20% of all schools (as well as those deemed similar to themselves) but their current GCSE pass rate had recently fallen 7% on the previous year (2012 – 37%). Slightly more anecdotally, it was evident from speaking to staff and residents that ACS had suffered from the long-term effect of having a poor reputation in the area and across the local authority. This appeared to have been accentuated by the positive reputations and examination results of two neighbouring schools (that fell just outside the same local education authority of ACS). Subsequently, these schools had long been a 'pull' for the more proactive parents and pupils living in Ayrefield for several generations, with data collated from ACS stating that nearly 5% of the current Y7 cohort from Ayrefield's six primary feeder schools had opted not to attend ACS, preferring instead to take up places at one of the two aforementioned schools. As an extension to this, it was evident that 'the school had faced

challenges in the recruitment and retention of teachers' (Ofsted, 2012: 7) which appeared to be indicative of both the reputation of the school and the behaviour and attainment of some pupils.

However, whilst there was strong evidence to suggest that ACS was indeed a school made up of white British, working-working class pupils, and that the school had persistently underachieved in relation to similar schools across the country (Ofsted, 2012), there was no evidence of any overtly significant issues such as assaults on staff, pupil violence, or significantly high absenteeism. Indeed, from time spent in the school and recent Ofsted reports it was clear that 'pupils were largely well behaved and conducted themselves safely and positively around school' (Ofsted, 2012: 3).

The school itself was a maintained, mixed-sex, non-denominational community comprehensive school with a specialism in humanities. The school building and facilities were part of a privately-funded initiative built in 2011 on the site of the old high school. Although the new construction included a contemporary three-storey look and feel along with a new sports hall, dance studio, and 3G pitch, the new building contained only the usual classroom and hall space. The lack of a gymnasium/weights room a seemingly frustrating omission for the PE staff and KS4 male pupils especially having been a key feature of the old school building.

Of the 965 pupils on roll at ACS the mix of genders was evenly split (486 girls and 479 boys), with 194 pupils currently eligible for SEN support. The school employed 60 teachers (including senior staff), 19 teaching assistants, and 22 non-classroom based support staff.

In relation to the school day, the timetable operated using alternative weeks (A and B) that led to pupils following different timetables in each of these weeks. School start times also differed between pupils in years seven to nine (KS3) and those in year KS4 (Y10 and

Y11), with KS3 pupils starting at 8.00am and finishing at 2.00pm, whilst KS4 lessons began at 10.00am and finished at 4.00pm.

The school allocated all KS4 pupils to a specifically named Leaders group (Future, Aspirational, Independent, Resourceful and Skilful) with Future Leaders being the highest achieving group down to the more 'vocational' Skilful Leaders group. Pupils were placed in their respective groups based up their previous academic achievement during KS3 and their current predicted grades by the end of KS4. More formally, this led to pupils assigned to a specific group that were then isolated from their peers in all timetabled lessons (except PE), and less formally to a strong awareness amongst staff and pupils of each person's grouping and the implications of this (e.g. level of qualifications undertaken and previous attainment).

In relation to the structure of PE at ACS, following a recent restructure of the KS3 (Y7-Y9) curriculum, male pupils currently took part in a relatively wide range of activities. However, there was evidence that this had not always been the case in the past, and current KS3 males were not expected to take part in gymnastics or dance. At KS4, all pupils (except Future Leaders) arrived in one of two 'blocks' in each year; namely North and South. All KS4 pupils were undertaking BTEC sport in an attempt to raise school examination results and in accordance with this, pupils took part in both classroom-based theory lessons as well as practical lessons during KS4 PE. In the latter, male pupils were provided with a choice of two activity options. The Future Leaders on the other hand, took part in GCSE (Y10) and AS level (Y11) courses and were timetabled at different times from their peers for PE. Both their theory and practical lessons involved mixed-gender groups.

ACS as a case study

Based on the information highlighted above, Ayrefield Community School was purposively selected to be a typical/exemplary case as it (and the surrounding area) was deemed to epitomise a white, working-class school. The decision to use the school as a typical case

enabled the researcher to work through the research questions that emerged from the review of literature and also 'examine key social processes' linked to working-class lads' lives without the constraints linked to the need to test a clear hypothesis (Bryman, 2012). Overall, therefore, a well-established case-study framework was employed that was based upon participant observation and various 'interviews' with pupils and staff (see; Beynon, 1985; Burgess, 1983; Hargreaves, 1967; Lacey, 1970; Mac an Ghail, 1988; Parker, 1996). These were aimed at examining several aspects of the lads' lives via a more inductive approach to data collection and analysis.

In addition to this, the very nature of the research – relying heavily of participant observation as it did – and the period time over which data was collected in the school, meant that the case study design leant heavily towards ethnography and in this sense could be described as broadly quasi-ethnographical. It would be difficult to highlight this case study as being purely ethnographic, however, due to the fact that the study stopped short of conducting observations outside of the school environment (as Willis did). The study also included a relatively structured approach to data collection (including focus group interviewing) and involved relatively sporadic visits rather than prolonged, consecutive periods of time spent collecting data that are more synonymous with true ethnographic research (Hammersley, 2006). However, the study did rely upon some ethnographic principles in that observations were rigid and highly focused (especially in the early phase of data collection) and were aimed at making conscious attempts to understand lads and PE teachers' beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours over a relatively prolonged period of time (Silverman, 2011). A conscious attempt was also made to ensure that all participants were observed in their 'natural' environment where everyday events could be observed which is very much synonymous with ethnographic led research (Gobo, 2011: 16-17). Ultimately then, the case study in ACS was highlighted as being a typical

case where the methodology was strongly influenced by ethnographic values and approaches to data collection.

In relation to the time scale of the study, despite the fact that data collection was only conducted over a period of 26 days in total, this did span a period of 14 months. Although the majority of data was collected at regular intervals during February and June 2013 via participant observations and focus groups, several follow-up days took place during April 2014 in order to follow up issues that had emerged following the analysis and interpretation of some data. Although the study, did stop short of being termed longitudinal as pupils were not tracked over several years (e.g. throughout their time at ACS or a key stage) and the data collection effectively included just one (albeit prolonged) 'visit' (Bryman, 2012) the study was deemed to be conducted over a 'prolonged' period.

Conducting the research

An initial 'familiarisation phase' took place during 28th January – 1st February 2013 where the researcher aimed to familiarise himself with the school and become a more 'accepted' presence around the PE department in particular. This was then followed by the covert observation of 45 PE lessons and 10 theory-based PE lessons during February, March, and April that became increasingly more focused and strategic as particular lads and groups began to emerge as being significant. As part of these observations approximately 50 guided conversations took place including 30 with staff, 15 with pupils, and five with non-PE staff working in the school, with the average length of these being approximately three minutes. Definitive figures are difficult to state here as not all guided conversation were written up. There were also opportunities to engage in additional observations that included a visit to a local college for an FE talk, accompanying the school athletics teams to the town championships, and a recruitment activity session led by the Royal Marines.

As this led to the acknowledgment and naming of the three lads groups in the form of Performers, Participants, and Problematics, a total of eight focus group interviews were

conducted over a period of several weeks in May. These were aimed at clarifying and/or validating some of the evidence that had emerged from earlier data collection via observation (McNaughton et al., 2014) as well as exploring some of the issues that had emerged from the literature review. A focus group with the male PE staff (n=4) was also conducted around the same time for similar reasons. All focus groups (staff and students) were conducted alongside continued overt lesson observations in mainly practical PE lessons in order to continue with data collection and further examine issues that had emerged from focus group interviews. This led to a total of 65 PE lesson observations (50 Practical and 15 classroom) being conducted during the duration of the entire study. Finally, 12 classroom-based observations in maths, science, and geography were conducted with pupils from all three Y11 lads groups (Y10 during initial phase of data collection). These took place during April 2014 in an attempt to examine issues that had emerged from the focus groups, as well as to gain a more complete view of their school lives. It is to a more detailed and chronological overview of the process of data collection that this study will now turn

Ethical considerations

Given the nature and focus of the case study, as well as the ages of the participants involved, attempts were consistently made to strive for the highest ethical standards both prior to, and during, the research phase. Conscious attempts were also consistently made to remain honest, avoid deception, and accept responsibility for the implications of research collection and analysis (Yin, 2014). Further to this, every attempt was made to ensure that research was conducted *with* the lads at ACS, and not something that was merely *done* to them, as can often be the case with research involving children (Campbell, 2008; Hill, 2006; Powell & Smith, 2009). In doing so, the principles of autonomy, non-maleficence, beneficence, and justice were all considered (Greig et al., 2013) by ensuring

that consent was gained (when appropriate), harm to participants was avoided, benefits of participation were communicated, and equitable and fair treatment was ensured.

Ethical approval

Once the literature review had been completed, appropriate methods selected, and research questions finalised, the process of ethical approval began. After consulting the British Sociological Association guidelines on ethical research (2002) a formal ethics application was made to the University of Chester ethics board that set out the design of the study and the nature of the various forms of data collection. A decision was made by the researcher to attend the research ethics committee meeting in person so that any issues or concerns could be explained and addressed. At this stage the intrusive nature of the study, as well as specific issues relating to deception and covert observation were discussed leading to full ethical approval being granted by the University ethics board. A suggestion that the participant consent form should be amended to include reverse consent for participation in focus groups was accepted and the content of the letter was changed accordingly. In addition, the ethics committee also impressed on the researcher the need to fully explain the nature and focus of the research to the head teacher of the school to be selected as the focus of the study in order to remain honest and avoid deception.

Selecting the school and gaining access

Several potential school sites emerged as possibilities for the focus of the case study during the initial phase of the research process. However, ACS was ultimately selected as it was deemed the most suitable for a study into white, working-class (male) pupils for the reasons highlighted previously in this chapter. Following this, a gatekeeper was sought so that initial contact could be made with a senior member of staff in the school and ultimately

a more formal meeting with the head teacher and the head of PE could be secured in order to negotiate access (Denscombe, 2010) and explain the full nature and focus of the research. This current member of staff at ACS (Y7 assistant year manager) emerged through the recommendation of a former colleague and a telephone conversation took place where the general outline of the research design was articulated and the potential of a meeting with the head teacher and head of PE was explored. As a result of this initial contact, the gatekeeper was able to secure an appointment with both the head teacher and the head of PE, prior to which the broad aims and design of the research were set out to both in a formal letter ahead of the meetings.

During the initial meeting with the head teacher the duration and intrusive nature of the research was highlighted and discussed in detail as well as providing the head teacher with the opportunity to view the successfully completed ethics application with a copy provided. In addition, the researcher's previous role as head of physical education in a relatively local secondary school was highlighted and discussed as well as the intention to utilise reverse ethical approval for participation in focus groups. The more significant ethical considerations relating to the covert nature of initial observations of the pupils, the temporary role of the researcher as LSA in the school, and the need for access to changing facilities were discussed and then justified in relation to the researcher's desire to minimise changes in pupil behaviour during the early stages of data collection. Following this meeting the head teacher expressed her full support for the aims and design of the study dependent on a full LA-specific DBS check being completed. This was subsequently gained via ACS administrative staff prior to the commencement of data collection.

The meeting with the head of PE took place on the same day during which the nature, duration, and focus of the study (examination of working-class PE) were explained. The impact that the researcher and data collection methods would have on the department was also highlighted. The researcher's initial role of LSA and covert nature of initial

observations, the overt nature of data collection with staff, and the use of additional methods (focus groups, guided conversations) were all described and accepted by the head of PE.

As previously stated there was an initial familiarisation week (Monday 28th January - Friday 1st February, 2013) that was aimed at the researcher becoming more aware of the day-to-day structure and ethos of the school, developing a plausible long-term 'identity' within the PE department at ACS, and justifying a presence with all members of the PE department. The PE staff were also given a broad overview of the nature of the research during the departmental meeting that took place early in the familiarisation week which included a more specific description of their potential involvement in the research (e.g. observation of their lessons) and information on the broad focus of the study. This was stated as being an 'examination of PE in working-class schools'. In addition to this, time was spent with a range of PE staff (including a school 'walk about' with the head of PE) and informal conversations took place with some relevant pastoral staff (e.g. head of Y11). Further to this, a range of PE lessons were observed and the researcher attended the PE department weekly meeting in a conscious attempt to become a familiar and accepted face in the PE department.

For the first several days of the familiarisation week, therefore, all efforts were made towards 'blending in' to the department generally, whilst also taking a very passive role in lessons. During these initial days in the school, the pupils never directly questioned the presence or role of the researcher so deception was largely avoided. Nevertheless, every attempt was made to formulate and develop the identity of part-time PE Learning Support Assistant (LSA) from around the local area so that participant observation could be conducted in a relatively covert manner and 'natural' behaviour could be observed. Although this assumed identity was more formally supported by an official ACS 'support staff' identity card and lanyard, additional attempts were made to act and dress

appropriately at all times. More specifically, a conscious effort was made to replicate and accentuate the 'local' accent when questioned or in brief conversation with any pupil, emphasise any knowledge of the local area when needed, and take every opportunity to demonstrate an interest in local and national sport (e.g. league one football). The overall aim of this approach was led by a desire to ensure that the behaviour of both staff and pupils would remain both natural and accurate (Evans, 2012; Gellner & Hirsch, 2001; Gobo, 2011) when data collection formally began.

Early stages of data collection via participant observation

Following the initial familiarisation week, a more structured timetable was formulated with the assistance of the PE staff so that more formal observations and data collection in the form of field notes could begin. This was facilitated by the fact that a largely overt role was adopted with them from the outset. The focus of this timetable was primarily aimed at observing as many KS4 PE lessons as possible due to the period of time such pupils had spent at ACS. However, a wide range of KS3 PE lessons were also included in an attempt to gather a broad range of data as well as to contextualise some of the findings that were beginning to emerge from KS4 lesson observations.

Therefore, more direct observations and data gathering (in the form of field notes) began during week two (Tuesday 5th February, 2013). At this stage great consideration was given to the need to act ethically despite the fact that an element of deception underpinned the covert observation of pupils at this stage. Every effort was made to view and record the pupils' actions equitably and that their anonymity was secured in order to ensure harm was avoided.

Mindful of the fact that an element of deception underpinned the adoption of the role of LSA at this stage, the researcher's involvement in lessons became a little more interactive in an attempt to match the expected role of a PE-specific LSA working in the department. The specific role in each lesson was discussed in advance with the relevant

member of staff and although this was predominantly one of covert full member, the level of participation often changed between lessons. This included full participation in some practical football lessons (e.g. goalkeeper), partial observation in other practical lessons (e.g. LSA in Y10 circuits lesson), and minimal participation in some classroom-based PE lessons (e.g. Y10 BTEC sport lesson). In fact, taking part in some practical aspects of lessons not only became inevitable, and at times unavoidable (Yin, 2009), it also provided an opportunity to gain acceptance and status amongst the lads by either taking on roles that no other pupil wanted to do (e.g. goalkeeper) or demonstrating a degree of sporting competence. This opportunity to remain flexible and neither time-dependent nor constrained by method increased the opportunity to remain reactive to incidents that occurred and/or deemed relevant (Simons, 2009). Finally, at no point during this initial phase of data collection was the role and/or presence of the LSA questioned by pupils which enabled the level of deception to be minimised.

During this initial phase of observation, data was gathered in lessons via the form of mental notes that were then subsequently recorded as more tangible, written-notes at convenient times in the school day (e.g. lunch, free periods) and completed in more detail that evening (Bryman, 2012). In the early stages of the research process, anything that was deemed to have the potential to have any relevance to the aims of the study was recorded, although as the study evolved the focus and length of the field notes did become more summative and specific. Throughout the observation process, attempts were consistently made to avoid personal bias and preconceived ideas (Evans, 2012). In addition, in many cases the taking of more detailed notes prompted the specific request to observe particular groups in certain environments (e.g. Future Leaders in AS level PE) which often also led to split observations during 90 minutes lessons.

During this more focused aspect of lesson observations, not only were there no obvious signs of any suspicion amongst PE staff that could feasibly be expected in this

context (Sharp, 2000), but it was apparent that all PE staff were often willing to take on the role of key informant (Bryman, 2012). This was often done by bringing the researchers attention (where relevant) to specific pupils, groups, and lessons and providing spontaneous ‘tip-offs’ before and during lessons (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995).

Conducting guided conversations at ACS

In almost all cases, questions that were posed during or following observations were asked either as a way of gaining a greater understanding of issues/incidents or to develop a clearer interpretation of staff and pupils’ views and values (Yeo et al., 2014). In some cases, with PE staff in particular, informal conversations did take place some time after a given lesson or incident. However, in most cases, guided conversations took place either immediately prior to/following a specific lesson or during the lesson itself. In almost all cases these took place either in the changing rooms whilst lads were changing (e.g. “What are this group usually like in practical PE?”) or in the PE office immediately after/before lessons (“I notice this group are staying on football this term?”). As a direct result of the nature and location of these conversations, therefore, questions were often very spontaneous and fluid (Rubin & Rubin, 1995; Yin, 2009) especially when posed within lessons (“Will this group move on to summer activities after the Easter break?”) or in response to an unexpected incident (“Does he usually react like that in a game situation?”). The specific aim with these was usually to try and gain the member of staff’s interpretation and feelings towards an incident that we had both observed and in some cases been directly involved in (Patton, 1980). Therefore, not only were ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions often utilised with staff, but two-way discussions were often common (Simons, 2009; Yin, 2009). Usually a conscious attempt was being made to understand the immediate and long-term context of a particular incident or on-going issues (“Why do you think that most of the lads seemed to completely lose interest in the game towards the end?” or “You say they only

seem interested in football, why do you think that is?"). In addition, more specific attempts were also made to gather the individual attitudes, views, and interpretations of staff which became easier as the study progressed and enhanced to some degree by the relative freedom of an unrecorded, one-to-one conversation (Yin, 2009). All staff were made fully aware from the outset that any responses that emerge from such conversations could be included in the final thesis, and all subsequent quotes used were shown to all staff (both PE and classroom) before inclusion in the final results.

In relation to the use of guided conversation with pupils, a slightly more covert approach was needed. This was very much the case in the early stages of data collection (before focus groups had been organised and conducted) so that the actual task and role of the researcher were not compromised. Not only did the involvement of the pupils in the lesson also need to be considered (especially in highly active practical lessons), but also a relative reluctance or ambivalence to the posing of questions was very common amongst many of the lads, especially those in KS4. In relation to this, questions posed to pupils were often very short in nature (Yeo et al., 2014) ("Did you enjoy that?"). More specifically, such questions were then utilised for a specific purpose in order to assess a pupil's general attitude towards a sport ("Do you like tennis?"), determine their level of knowledge and/or understanding in a lesson ("You won the last point then so what's the score now?") or to gain a better understanding of their previous or current involvement in a sport or activity ("Do you ever play tennis outside of school?"). In many cases, the questions were also delivered with a false level of ignorance or naivety in order to try to relax and empower the pupils towards a confident and realistic response by 'hiding' a question within a brief conversation ("What's travelling/double dribbling again? I've never played much basketball").

Both during, and following on from these guided conversations, the consideration that responses were often spontaneous (Evans & Jones, 2011) and could be

misinterpreted and/or forgotten (Bryman, 2012) was consistently acknowledged. Therefore, a conscious effort to ensure that the nature, context, and content of any conversation were recorded as soon after the event as was practically possible (usually within the hour). In most cases this also included attempts to recall and record significant responses as accurately as possible for potential use in data analysis and discussion.

As a result of these covert observations in practical PE lessons and classroom-based PE lessons, it became evident that the consistent attitudes and actions were being observed within and across lessons that not only led to distinct groups of lads emerging, but also need to conduct further examination and analysis. Observations up to this point led to distinct groups of lads from within the same year group emerging who participated in PE lessons and engaged with PE staff in distinctly different ways. These groups were subsequently termed Problematics, Performers and Participants (to which the vast majority of male pupils at ACS could be assigned). The decision was made at this stage of data collection, therefore, to sacrifice anonymity as a cover researcher in order to conduct focus group interviews by selecting groups of male pupils from each of the three aforementioned groups alongside continued lesson observations. How the focus groups were conducted and the participants selected will be addressed following a more detailed explanation of the background to these distinct groups.

Emergence of the 'lads' groups

In relation to the emergence of the three groups for the purpose of the study, early discussions with PE staff initially suggested that not all lads at ACS had similar aspirations and degrees of engagement ('The Future Leaders are put on a bit of a pedestal, yes' – Alex, PE teacher). In addition, certain lads came as distinct and isolated groups to their respective PE lessons and in some cases took part in differing lessons (e.g. Future Leaders' mixed gender AS PE volleyball lessons).

In the case of the Future Leaders (Performers) there was strong evidence as early as the familiarisation week to suggest that their attitude to school, academic ability, and potential life trajectories were starkly different to many of their peers. As a result, the potential to view and assess these lads as a separate group during the course of the study emerged relatively early on. For members of the other four leaders groups, however, this process took a little longer to become apparent, not least because these lads all arrived to their PE lessons together and were effectively 'free' to choose their practical activity regardless of the allocated Leaders group. Despite this, following the observation of a range of practical and classroom-based PE lessons there was evidence to suggest that two additional groups had emerged that were subsequently termed the 'Problematics' and 'Participants'.

Defining the lads groups

In relation to the emergence of the three groups during the early part of the study, differences between the attitudes and actions of the Participants and Problematics (who arrived at PE together) were relatively subtle, ranging from how they responded to their name on the register, through to what they wore in lessons, the manner in which they spoke to one another, and how they interacted with PE staff.

The Problematic group seemed to enjoy a slightly elevated level of status and prominence within their year group. Their local accent was extremely strong and swearing often made up a good deal of their vocabulary. Their speech was littered with colloquialisms and the use of derogatory terms was common. They appeared to take great pride in using words that they presumed staff did not understand (e.g. "bare sick" "bang art"), and they consistently used terms that were aimed at questioning the sexuality and masculinity of peers and friends ("faggot", "pussy", "fanny").

In relation to their participation and engagement in PE, early observations suggested that the Problematic lads were more likely to favour the 'choice' of football. When playing, these lads took great pride in largely 'masculine' behaviours and appeared to enjoy the physicality of competitive team games. In terms of dress, gold jewellery and the wearing of trainers was evident amongst the Problematics as they arrived to get changed, as were their persistent attempts to flout school rules by wearing jackets or branded tracksuit tops inside the school building. Consistent with this approach, the wearing of full PE kit was very rare among the Problematics. When observed around school and in BTEC theory lessons, the Problematic lads took great pride in walking around without a bag, consistently arrived late to lessons (often smelling of smoke), and tended to adopt a variety of methods to delay the start of learning such (e.g. asking to go to the toilet). During lessons, staff consistently offered rewards and/or sanctions such as allowing them to listen to music in order to keep these lads on task or simply to minimise the disruption to the rest of the group. In short, the Problematics were the pupils who were synonymous with problematic behaviour amongst both their teachers and peer group. Whilst this varied between individual pupils to some degree and between lessons, the vast majority of lads assigned to this group were often disengaged with formal school life, were well aware of their ability to create problems around school, and consistently created a variety of challenges for a range of staff at ACS.

In contrast, the Participant lads' use of swear words was much less evident. There was no obvious wearing of jewellery, school shoes were more formal in style, and jackets were removed whilst inside the school building as school rules dictated. In some cases, lads broadly assigned to the Participant group even carried bags around with them from lesson to lesson. In their PE lessons, Participants were much more likely to arrive on time and take up places together in the closest of two changing rooms to the staff. In the majority of these cases, the Participants changed fully into appropriate PE kit and were much more

likely to opt for the indoor activity option offer (e.g. table tennis, basketball). In lessons they were much more inclined to follow instructions by staff, work independently if/when required, participate in game-related drills, and behave in a generally more engaged and acceptable manner. In the more formal lesson environment (BTEC Sport), the differences between this group and the Problematics were even more evident and this was clearly accentuated by the fact that they were 'enjoying' a sense of relative isolation from the more Problematic lads during their classroom-based lessons. As a result, the Participant lads generally entered the lesson silently and on time, and moved to their seats with little fuss. Whilst they did often have the confidence to speak and joke with their peers, this took place strictly within their relatively close friendship groups and very rarely involved the teacher or the entire class. During the course of the lesson, Participant lads generally went about their work diligently and generally responded well to staff guidance and instructions.

The Performer group on the other hand were a group very much on their own due, in part, to their relative isolation from their peers throughout all their studies. It was clear almost immediately from observations and their interactions with staff that this group had a quite different perspective on school, education, and their futures to the majority of their peers at ACS. In terms of appearance, however, they remained strongly influenced by many of the social demands imposed on them, and as a result often adopted a similar 'dress code' to the Problematic lads in the form of black trainers and tracksuit tops. Nonetheless, these lads were far more 'well kept' in the sense that their hair was cut differently from their Problematic peers, and all clothing was branded and in good condition. On the whole, their similar dress, lesson groupings, values, and attitudes, clearly seemed to have led to them emerging as a very specific group that moved around school and worked in lessons as part of a very tight knit and mutually orientated group. Put simply, these lads were top of the academic tree and were very much aware of their status in school. Whilst seemingly proud of it, however, they also appeared very much aware of the

range of contradictions that this level of attainment and engagement in education brought. In both practical and classroom-based lessons they were keen to express their personality and clearly had relatively informal and positive relationships with their teachers. After an initial 'relaxed' start to many of the lessons observed, however, both the Performer lads and their respective teachers got down to the focus of the lesson very quickly and the atmosphere was one of progress and genuine engagement, with an interesting sense of genuine competition between the lads emerging in the group.

Throughout the early lesson observations and subsequent attempts to allocate the KS4 lads at ACS into one of the aforementioned groups, there were incidents where the allocation of some pupils was not straightforward or even possible. In this regard, a conscious effort was made not to generate sub-cultures that were convenient oversimplifications, or fail to acknowledge that there were inevitably lads at ACS who could not be easily contained in any group. Therefore, any lads that appeared to fall between two adjacent groups did not feature significantly in the more specific aspects of research towards the latter stages of the study (e.g. focus groups). For the specific lads who became the focus of observations and interviews, Weber's (1904) concept of an ideal type was utilised as an analytical construct in order to assign KS4 lads in the study to one of the three groups. As this approach has been used in the past as basis for comparative study, the general theory of an ideal type was utilised in order to develop a range of broad criteria for each of the three groups (Problematics, Performers and Participants) that could subsequently be used in order create a 'measuring rod' that would help ascertain similarities as well as deviations in concrete cases (Coser, 1977: 223-224). In relation to this, whilst each of the three ideal types were purely abstract concepts, the criteria for allocation to one of the three groups (where it was deemed possible) was essentially built upon the assumption that component actors will/would behave in particular ways in certain social situations. Therefore whilst a 'full empirical embodiment' of either type of 'lad' (Coser,

1977: 223-224) was not possible, very obvious and relatively specific traits did emerge across various areas of school (language, attitude to learning) that meant in many cases the allocation of 'lads' to their respective groups was possible and even in some cases quite straightforward. In the first instance an actual 'ideal type' that had emerged in the early stages of the study was utilised as a reference point. Following on from this a range of tangible (Leaders group, qualification path, behaviour, friendship group) and more subjective factors (dress, language, punctuality) was considered.

Selecting participants for the focus groups

The relevance of these three groups used throughout the study became increasingly apparent when the study moved towards the use of focus groups as a research method. Whilst it was always the intention to include a range of focus groups in the overall case study design, the emergence of these three distinct, and relatively stable groups of lads, meant that participants in all but one focus group (Y9 mixed) were purposively selected from just one of the respective groups following an initial phase of covert observations. In each instance the most prominent 'ideal type' was selected from the required group (e.g Problematic) along with approximately 10 additional participants that demonstrated similar traits and attitudes. Following an explanation to staff regarding my reasons for such an approach to the specific make-up of each focus group, additional discussions with PE staff took place in order to confirm the final selections. In some cases, class lists and pupil photographs were utilised, whilst in others, discreet discussions took place before or during lessons where suitable participants were either confirmed or dismissed. Ultimately, therefore, the broader allocation of KS4 lads to one of three lads groups following lesson observations was utilised in order to identify the most suitable participants for focus group interviews that took place from mid-March onwards.

The names (pseudonyms) of all male pupils that took part in focus group interviews are set out below as well as the duration of each interview. These consisted of three Problematic lads groups in KS4, two Performer focus groups, and two Participants that were made up from lads based on the process and criteria highlighted above. An additional Y9 focus group was collated based on lesson observations, proposed Leaders group allocations for Y10, and communication with staff with the intention of including a mix of actual and potential members of various lads groups moving in to KS4.

| | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| Year 9 Group Mixed | |
| Duration | 52 minutes |
| | |
| Problematics | Craig, Dean, Scott |
| Performers | Lucas, Nathan, Connor |
| Participants | Kieran, Regan |

| | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Y10 Problematic Group One | |
| Duration | 56 minutes |
| | |
| Taking part in focus group | Wayne, McKenzie, Lee, Kaden, Jay, Zak |

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Y10 Problematic Group Two | |
| Duration | 48 minutes |
| | |
| Taking part in focus group | Bailey, Levi, Karl, Corey, Tyler, Shane |

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Y10 Participant Group One | |
| Duration | 54 minutes |
| | |
| Taking part in focus group | Chris, Mark, John, Paul, Alfie, David, Ben. |

| | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Y10 Participant Group Two | |
| Duration | 1hr 3 minutes |
| | |
| Taking part in focus group | Oliver, Ryan, Richard, Phillip, Daniel, Anthony, Stephen |

| | |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| Y10 Performer Group One | |
| Duration | 1 hour 11 minutes |
| | |

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Taking part in focus group | Finley, Harry, Oscar, Ollie, Will, Jacob |
|----------------------------|--|

| | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Y11 Problematic Group One | |
| Duration | 54 minutes |
| | |
| Taking part in focus group | Riley, Troy, Danny, Tony, Dane, Rohan |

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Y11 Performer Group One | |
| Duration | 50 minutes |
| | |
| Taking part in focus group | Aaron, Shaun, Sam, Ethan, Thomas, James, Callum. |

Conducting focus groups at ACS

As previously stated, lesson observations, guided conversations, and communication with PE staff led to the selection of the most appropriate pupils to represent one of the three lads groups (Performer, Problematic and Participant) in a focus group interview. At this point, the covert nature of all future observations was compromised to a large extent, which was an inevitable consequence of utilising this method (Bryman, 2012). In order to minimise the impact on pupil behaviour that being exposed as researcher potentially had, however, the Y11 Performer group (Future Leaders) were selected to take part in the first focus group as it was felt that this particular group were mature enough to respond to the slight change in circumstance and retain predominantly 'natural' behaviour and responses for the remainder of the study.

Following an initial contact with potential participants, parental consent forms were sent through the post directly to each pupil's home address which outlined the nature of the study generally and focus groups specifically, assured parents/carers of their sons' anonymity, and provided appropriate contact details should they wish their son not to take part. Following this, a suitable room was booked in the school building and an appropriate, theory-based, 90-minute PE lesson was selected from the timetable so that disruption and frustration on the part of the participants could be minimised. This procedure was followed for all subsequent focus groups involving pupils during the study.

The focus groups were conducted in line with Finch et al's (2014) proposed five-stage structure where ground rules were initially set, introductions made, and an opening topic discussed. This was followed by the broader discussions and final conclusion. Initially, therefore, all participants were welcomed, the goals of the research were outlined, and conventions of conducting focus groups were covered (e.g. try to speak one at a time, respond to other peoples comments, and respect their views) (Bryman, 2012).

During the focus groups, consistent attempts were made to promote group interaction (Kitzinger, 1994), as well as attempting to ensure that certain participants did not overly dominate discussion and all members of the group were able to express their opinion. Due, in part, to the fact that each focus group was primarily made up of friendship groups, the majority of interactions were complimentary as opposed to argumentative (Kitzinger, 1994) and there was little evidence of individuals feeling intimidated or reluctant to contribute due the presence of the other members.

Given the age of the participants, lack of experience of speaking at length about their own attitudes and experiences and, in some cases inability to adequately articulate themselves, the interview script was initially designed to include more open and straightforward questions in order to promote early contributions and discussion (e.g. "Can you tell me a little about your PE experiences at ACS please?"). Following this, a structured list of questions was utilised in order to ensure that all relevant areas were covered in the time available. In some cases there was a relatively high level of moderator involvement although care was always taken not to pressure participants in to rushed answers or ask leading questions.

The focus groups conducted with lads groups during the course of the study were designed primarily to examine the initial research questions and as a result included topics relating to the literature review as well as issues that had emerged during the course of the study. Specific questions were aimed at exploring the views of the participants on a range

of topics relating to school, PE, family life, and leisure pursuits in order to develop a greater understanding of how the lads' social background may have come to influence their experiences of PE and school sport. Conscious and consistent attempts were also made during all focus groups to use a range of questions on a diverse range of topics in order to examine the lads' broader lives as a way of contextualising their attitudes towards and behaviour in school PE lessons, including their attitudes towards their teachers. In addition, given the fact that all participants had been observed covertly in both practical and classroom-based PE lessons over a period of time, questions were also aimed at clarify aspects of observed behaviour ("You seem to play a lot of football in PE") or to challenge any inconsistencies between responses and their actions ("You like cricket? Have you chosen to do that in PE recently then?")

As the study progressed, different groups of lads were invited to take part in focus group interviews as they emerged as distinct groups to the researcher (Problematics and Participants 11th April). In relation to this, during the course of this process the interpretation of previous focus group responses were considered and utilised in order to amend certain questions and in some cases pursue new lines of questioning that had not previously been apparent to the researcher. The length of the focus groups ranged from 48 minutes to 1 hour 11 minutes with the average duration being 56 minutes.

Conducting male PE staff focus group

Upon the completion of all pupil focus groups, this stage of the data collection process culminated with a focus group involving all four members of the male PE staff (duration 1 hour 27 minutes). For this a separate interview script was used which included questions that had emerged from a review of the literature as well as discussion points that had presented themselves during the course of the study, either through observations or in most cases individual and group conversations. The overall aim of this focus group was

to facilitate further discussion surrounding the key issues that had emerged during the course of the study. The focus group was recorded in the confines of the PE office, was digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim. On completion of this process a copy of the transcript was sent via e-mail to all four members of staff so that they could chose to have any of their responses omitted should they so wish, although no such request was forthcoming.

| Name | Age | Qualifications | Years as qualified teacher | Years working at ACS | Position of responsibility |
|-------------|------------|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| Rich | 36 | BSc Sports Science PGCE Physical Education (Secondary) | 14 | 8 | Head of PE Department |
| Phil | 42 | BEd Physical Education with QTS | 21 | 9 | Former Head of PE department. Current Assistant Head teacher |
| Alex | 32 | BSc Sports and Exercise Sciences PGCE Physical Education (Secondary) MSc Education Studies | 10 | 10 | Assistant Head of Year 11 |
| Paul | 36 | BSc Sports Science PGCE Physical Education (Secondary) | 14 | 6 | Assistant Head of Year 7 |

Follow-up observations

As focus groups were conducted over a period of several weeks, PE lessons observations continued across all groups where the aim was to continue to gather observational data and cross-check some responses that had emerged from the focus groups. Upon the completion of the focus group interviews, however, it was deemed necessary to complete a period of classroom-based, non-PE lesson observations in order to generate a greater and wider understanding of observations that had taken place in the PE environment as well as to contextualise responses that had emerged from focus group transcripts.

Therefore, a week of observations took place towards the end of the academic year in order to observe lessons that had taken part in focus groups from all three lesson groups in a range of their timetabled lessons. In order to do this, specific staff across a range of departments were contacted by the PE staff on the researcher's behalf in order to gain permission to spend time in their lesson. In almost all cases, this involved being present at the classroom before pupils arrived so that a brief conversation with the teacher could take place and that any disruption resulting from entering once the lesson had started could be minimised. Staff were made aware that the majority of the pupils would be aware of the researcher and that the intention of the lesson observation was solely to observe the actions and responses of the pupils as the researcher took on the role of a non-participating observer. The same approach to classroom lessons was used to that utilised throughout the study, in that mental notes were taken during the lesson and written up at a later stage, and the researcher's involvement in the lesson ranged from static observer to pro-active classroom assistant depending on the nature of the lesson and the request of the teacher. Finally, several 'follow-up' days took place during the following academic year (e.g. Thursday 10th April 2014) in order to clarify a range of issues that had emerged during the data processing phase as well as to conduct several additional lesson observations.

Data Analysis

The process of collating, organising, analysing, and presenting the findings was something that was considered throughout the data collection process. Given the time scale over which the study was conducted and the range of methods utilised in data collection a range of approaches were used. Appropriate research methodologies texts were accessed that were specific to case study design in order to inform and justify the data analysis process and it is to a more detailed explanation of this process that this chapter will now turn.

It has already been stated that initial observations were largely inductive resulting in broad, but brief, notes being made during the early stages of data collection. These were always then written up by hand in more detail at the end of the school day and placed within documents that reflected the general theme of the observation (e.g. football lessons, changing rooms). It was very much evident at this stage that this observational data required managing and analysing in much the same way as interview data (Ritchie et al., 2014) rather than simply being viewed (mistakenly by some) as the end product of the findings (Berg & Lune, 2012; May, 2011). Therefore, observation notes within these documents were then labelled and organised more specifically which led to an increasing number of documents emerging. These related to the people involved (e.g. PE teachers), their behaviours (Y11 lads strong preference to play football in PE), and their interactions with others (Y11 boys selecting non-football option in PE) (Lofland, Snow, Anderson & Lofland, 2006; Ritchie et al 2014). As the broad content and specific comments contained in guided conversation at this time were also being recorded and typed up, similar labels were applied to these data leading to them being added to the observation notes of the most appropriate document (e.g. “the only thing that these lads will do is play football” added to ‘Y11 lads strong preference for football’). As a result, the observation and guided conversation data became more organised and structured and although it was evident from the literature that ‘analysis of case study evidence is one of the least developed aspects of doing case studies’ (Yin, 2014: 133), an attempt was made at this stage to begin the process of ‘playing’ with the data in its current form in order to search for patterns, insights and concepts.

At this early stage, the data analysis process was largely influenced by personal interpretations of observation and guided conversation data as is common in case study design (Lofland et al., 2006). However, with this in mind, the data collated at this stage was manipulated in a variety of ways (Miles & Huberman, 1994) using a combination various

strategies and techniques (Yin, 2014) so that preliminary interpretations could emerge and be considered in relation to previous literature and the future direction of the study/data collection. In relation to this, a further attempt was made to begin searching for linkage within the data between incidents, lessons, pupils, and PE teachers in order to highlight and examine any associations and patterns relating to interactions within and between particular groups (e.g. PE teachers and Y11 lads) (Ritchie et al., 2014). As a result of 'pouring through the data' at this stage, the start of a more focused 'analytical path' began to emerge that was based on 'additional relationships' (Yin, 2014: 136-137) and led to the emergence of the three lads groups. As a consequence of this, not only did the observations at ACS become more focus and strategic following this initial data analysis (such as splitting observations of PE lessons between Problematic and Participants), but focus groups were scheduled to explore the areas highlight above (among others) in more detail. The content and focus of these related to aspects highlighted in the literature review as well as themes that had begun to emerge from the initial analysis of data. Interview questions contained a mixture of questions relating to previous research (e.g. "what do you do in your spare time away from school?" and "who do you play with?") as well as observations and guided conversations ("why do you think that certain lads choose not to play football in PE?").

The process of thematic analysis was applied to all focus groups transcripts where key themes were distinguished and subsequently extracted from the data using specific labels to comments in order to do so (Bryman, 2012). Due to the fact that initial data analysis had taken place, several exiting labels already existed that were subsequently applied to the transcripts (e.g. CG – Playing football at the cage after school and PEP – Positive attitude towards PE as a subject). Other codes were also generated and applied to the focus group transcripts for issues that had yet to emerge in the study (e.g. SVG – Social video gaming/internet link up and IBO – Influenced by others in choice of PE option).

Although data analysis software has become increasingly common in the analysis of this type of data (Silverman, 2014), this process was conducted by hand in direct conjunction with existing documents containing data linked to observations and guided conversations. This was done as part of an attempt to link the various sources of data together and focus and reduce the amount of data (Bryman, 2012). As the transcripts were analysed in increasingly greater detail, broader themes and labels were broken down further and these were then added to the most appropriate data document to form. In doing so, 'key passages' were ultimately selected for inclusion in the data documents that made significant and relevant points across more than one focus group (MacNaughton & Myers, 2004).

Although throughout this process, no specific consideration was given to recording the frequency of comments or the body language and reactions of participants - as is the case in the analysis of some focus groups (MacNaughton & Myers, 2004) - the context of the comment (Wilkinson, 2011) was considered in relation to the group and the 'common sense knowledge of what the participants' words mean was also take into account throughout (Silverman, 2013: 221).

Ultimately, therefore, the on-going process of data analysis and the specific sorting and interpretation of data (before and after the conducting of focus groups) led to a significant number and range of data documents to consider. At this point a decision was made to cease data collection due to the fact the researcher was confident that all relevant evidence had been collected and little relevant evidence remained untouched (Yin, 2014). Although it was acknowledged that some related and potentially significant avenues had not been explored outside of the case/school (Baxter & Jack, 2008) (such as observing the lads outside of the school environment during active leisure), ethical considerations and time constraints largely prevented this. Therefore, the task of presenting the findings in a

logical and coherent structure before than relating these to sociological concepts and previous literature began.

It has been acknowledged that being selective regarding data to be used in the final study is particularly difficult where a lot of data has been generated. However, a conscious attempt was made to ensure that sufficient evidence was presented within the findings that demonstrates that the researcher 'has spent quality time in the field making penetrating inquiries while there' (Yin, 2014: 205). During this phase of data analysis, the researcher engaged in a process of explanation building (George & Bennett, 2004) where an attempt was made to explain the findings through casual links that had emerged during the study. More specifically, the evidence contained in the data documents was considered in relation to the lads groups and PE teachers and the influences of the school environments, their social backgrounds, and their past and current lives (leisure lifestyles, family, friends).

Writing up the study overall emerged as being difficult, not only given the sheer range and amount of issues that emerged from data collection and analysis, but also because the reporting phase in any case study design is difficult as it does not follow a stereotypic form (Yin, 2014). However, a linear-analytic structure (Yin, 2014) was utilised that included a review of prior literature, details regarding methods used, and a separate findings and discussion chapter. The two latter chapters were designed and written in an attempt to make sense of the findings and offer some form of academic explanation for the outcomes/issues that emerge ahead of a final conclusions chapter. In addition, attempts were made to effectively present the most relevant evidence, including 'how the investigation was conducted and how the collected evidence was handled and interpreted' (Bachor, 2002: 21) in the hope that the reader would be able to arrive at an 'independent conclusion about the validity of the researcher's interpretation' (Yin, 2014: 205).

Chapter 5: Findings

The aim of this chapter is to present the main findings of the research regarding how working-class male pupils (lads) negotiated their PE experiences as well as the ways in which the PE teachers responded to the actions and attitudes of their pupils. Due to the

emergence of the three lads groups during the course of the study (Problematics, Performers and Participants), the findings will also be presented in a way that highlights how these seemingly 'ordinary' working-class lads came to experience and influence their PE in different ways. In order to do so, this chapter will initially examine the various ways that the lads came to view and engage in PE, and then move on to the issues that appeared to have influenced the lads actions and attitudes to PE, namely: what they 'choose' to do in their leisure time, the influence of their parents/family, and the way in which they engage and achieve in school life generally.

Data collated from more than one method is often presented together in order to highlight an aspect of the findings (e.g. observation notes along with focus groups responses) and as a result the findings are not presented chronologically. Instead, the findings chapter will firstly address the emergence and characteristics of the three lads groups at ACS before examining the ways in which these lads experienced other aspects of their lives.

Emergence and categorisation of the lads

Performer lads

During the initial familiarisation week, the Performer lads were the first to emerge as a distinct group. The fact that these lads were made up of Future Leaders meant that they took part in mixed-sex PE lessons as part of their respective GCSE (Y10) and AS level (Y11) PE lessons in complete isolation from the remainder of their peers.

Within their classroom-based PE lessons the Performer lads appeared genuinely engaged in the content of the lesson and demonstrated a very mature and focused attitude. The questions that the lads asked were relevant and seemed genuinely aimed at developing their knowledge. Tasks set by PE staff were completed with little prompting from their teacher (Alex), and the presence of female students did not prove to be a

significant distraction for them. In practical sessions, the lads appeared to value the activities in which they were taking part (e.g. volleyball), all pupils were in full PE kit, and the working atmosphere was genuinely positive. More generally, the Performer lads arrived to lessons on time (often together) and despite some wearing tracksuit tops and all-black trainers, they generally wore 'suitable' and appropriate school uniform. From an early stage in the study it was evident that the Performer lads had a strong and positive relationship with the PE staff at ACS. The familiar and confident way in which they spoke and approached their PE teachers in lessons and around school was strong evidence of this. In short, it was evident that the Future Leaders in both Y10 and 11 were a very distinct group of pupils at ACS and these early assumptions regarding their existence were confirmed by Alex (PE teacher) following a guided conversation during an Y11 AS level theory lesson:

This lot (Performers) are a great bunch of lads and have been friends right from year 7. They are in my tutor group now so I see them every morning and they have all their lessons together now so they are really flying at the minute. They push each other quite a bit and are a pleasure to teach. I had them for GCSE PE last year, which they did in a year, and now they're doing AS level. It's the first time we've tried it and I know they're only Y11 but we think that they're up to it. It helps that they're a really sporty lot too and quite grown up compared to some other lads in their year. To be honest compared to a lot of groups of kids here they are a real breath of fresh air and the lessons we have with them are great, nice atmosphere. We have a laugh and that but they want to do well and I really get a lot from that.

Problematic lads

The next group to emerge from initial lesson observations were the Problematic group with the earliest indication that such a group existed coming during a Y11 practical BTEC lesson. As part of a larger practical group that included pupils from all Leaders groups (except Future) distinct groups of lads arrived almost 10 minutes late (with several smelling of smoke) After entering the changing rooms they displayed overt examples of flouting uniform rules (e.g. jewellery, white trainers), and needed to be actively encouraged to get 'changed'. During the practical lesson, although participation and engagement was high, bad language and overt physical and verbal aggression was common. In theory lessons

they displayed much of the same behaviours as had been observed in the practical sessions in the sense that they arrived five minutes late, sat in clear friendship groups, and took a while to begin the more formal part of the lesson. Although their relationship with the teacher was relatively positive, they drifted in and out of the tasks set. Distracting behaviour was also common and certain incentives were consistently presented as way to ensure written work was completed (“Once this unit is done we can focus more on practical” – Rich: PE teacher). Again, during one particular lesson, Rich confirmed initial thoughts regarding the presence and nature of this specific group of lads:

These lads (Problematics) are now at the point where they pretty much do what they want. Don’t get me wrong, we can manage them, they generally come to school and turn up to lessons, but once they are together it’s a bit like a mob mentality, especially the Y11s who are leaving in a few months. It’s more crowd control, especially for a lot of other teachers around school. Imagine trying to teach this lot maths, they’d need a medal as big as a dustbin lid
(Guided Conversation: Rich)

Participant lads

In relation to the emergence of the Participants, the existence of this distinct group became evident as a result of the early identification of the Performer and Problematic groups. However, they were not merely labelled as a result of their presence in a ‘middle band’ and did demonstrate their own specific characteristics during early lesson observations. The Participants arrived and engaged in learning in much the same way as the Performers did. They changed for PE quickly and with little fuss, and participation in lessons was high. In theory lessons, they completed tasks with little prompting from staff in a relatively detached yet engaged lesson environment. However, the distinct difference between the Participants and Performers not only related to the level of work they were doing (BTEC rather than GCSE/AS level), but also their level and type of engagement with each other as well as PE staff. They participated in what seemed to be quite small and close-knit friendship groups (to which the majority of their communication was confined) and their interaction with the PE staff was fairly limited and pragmatic (e.g. “What do we need to do now sir?”). As with

the initial emergence of the Performers and Problematics, responses from Alex confirmed that a particular 'middle' group did exist at ACS:

Yeah, I suppose we've always known that these lads (Participants) exist. They always turn up and bring their kit, do what they're asked and never really cause us any problems. Just keep themselves to them themselves really. They're more 'computer' than sport and do fairly well around school generally, but they're a great bunch of kids. It's a shame really, in a school like this they get lost and just drift along in between a top few who are doing really well and the bottom end who are a nightmare (Guided Conversation: Alex - PE teacher)

This categorization notwithstanding, it is important to note that in some aspects of their day to day lives, attitudes, and actions the differences between the groups of lads could be relatively slight, especially between the top end Participants and the Performers, and the bottom end Participants and the Problematic lads. As a result, the lines between groups for other lads could be quite blurred and, to a large extent, this was to be expected in a school like ACS. The reason for this seemed strongly linked to the commonality regarding their class-related backgrounds. The almost identical backgrounds from which all these lads have emerged meant that it was not at all surprising that differences between these lads were often quite subtle, especially in relation to how they spent their leisure time and their views on family and work. However, it did seem that the school environment was a place where any subtle differences between the lads at ACS became more prevalent and accentuated.

Key Stage 3 PE at ACS

Year 7 boys' PE

Although the main focus of the study was on KS4 male pupils at ACS, some of the findings that emerged from the observation of Y7 lessons proved useful when attempting to explain the actions and attitudes of lads in Y10 and Y11.

Firstly, it was evident that a more 'prominent' group of lads could be found in all Y7 lessons whose behaviour indicated that they had the potential to emerge as 'Problematic' lads in the future. During lessons, these types of pupils were consistently less inclined to

listen to instructions from the PE staff, less likely to work independently, and more likely to deviate from the specific task at hand. When this issue was initially highlighted to staff, it did appear that this was something that they were very much aware of:

Ah yeah you can see it straight away. Look at him over there. Imagine what he's going to be like in Year 11, if he makes it that far. It's funny really you can spot them a mile off. Look at this lot sat waiting patiently and sensibly to go outside and then there's that lot in there who are just our 'footballers' of the future.
(Guided Conversation: Paul - PE teacher)

The presence of this problematic minority often had the impact of 'setting the tone' for the lesson as the low-level disruptive behaviour and erratic levels of engagement in lessons demonstrated by these lads, often spread throughout the group. Once again, this influence seemed to be something that the PE staff were very much aware of in that a "certain few" (Phil) often influenced the actions and attitudes of the rest of the group, not least because most lads at ACS in Y7 simply wanted to fit in:

Oh yes, there are certain lads in Y7 who hold some weight over the rest. In some cases the rougher kids have that status from primary school, but they soon work out amongst themselves who the hard lads are, and that is generally what it boils down to here. They know without knowing if you know what I mean? For some, they just stand out and are a constant issue in here (PE lessons) and around school. For most of others though at this stage they just want to keep their head down in year 7.
(Guided Conversation – Rich - PE teacher)

In an attempt to avoid constant confrontation during these lessons and the subsequent potential to generate a negative relationship with pupils, there was evidence that staff often allowed a degree of disruptive behaviour to take place during communication from/by staff:

I suppose that Rich could really have lost his temper through that part (pupils not listening), even now some of them aren't even listening. It's a difficult one. If he's not careful he could spend the entire lesson shouting at them but he'd just end up turning them off and come across simply as the shouting teacher. You just have to let things go a little otherwise you'd just get nothing done.
(Guided Conversation: Phil – PE teacher)

In addition, there was also evidence that staff saw the playing of full versions of games as the most successful way in which low-level disruption could be avoided, even when in some cases the Y7 lads possessed neither the skills nor knowledge to do so:

Rich: Yeah...once they're playing a game or whatever they're fine...even in tennis when we've started that with some of the (year 7) lads, they're like 'can't we just have a game' but we're like 'do you know some of the rules, oh no', 'what about some of the lines? Oh no', 'Can you do a forehand shot? What's that?' So, obviously they're not ready to play a game, but they don't see that.
(Staff Focus Group)

It was evident from lesson observations that a more relaxed approach to discipline and game-based lessons went a long way to minimising confrontation and increasing activity levels in these Y7 PE lessons. However, there was evidence from KS4 student focus groups that such an approach had limited the opportunity of many pupils to develop wider skills, knowledge, and interests. In relation to this, not only did current KS4 Participants and Performer lads suggest the narrow range of activities delivered within game-based lessons (often football) in PE in KS3 had been as a result the impact of the more difficult and prominent pupils present in their past PE lessons:

Ryan: Yeah, they (Problematics) kind of kicked off [misbehaved] (in year 8) if they didn't get to play football.

Oliver: If they didn't get to play football they weren't happy.

Phillip: It's a bit like they were getting rewarded for being stupid in't it.

...

Ryan: It were like, you got into t'changing rooms and in year 7,8 and 9 the teachers asked you 'what do you want to do today' and before any of us could really say owt [anything] they were in the teachers face saying football and they dint [didn't] want to upset them by saying no so it was just 'right we're playing football' even when some people dint [didn't] really wanna [want to].

ASc: Would it be fair to say Richard, that maybe you dint [didn't] want to do football.

Richard: No I don't really like football that much.

(Focus Group: Y10 Participant: 2)

But they also felt that such a narrow curriculum and lack of drill-based lessons had subsequently had a negatively impact upon their learning and skill-development in the PE:

John: Dint [didn't] learn much really just from playing t'games and we dint [didn't] learn new skills or stuff like that.

ASc: And do you think that this has held you back anyway?

Lads: Yeah.

ASc: You've all said yes, so can you expand on that John?

John: Because we didn't get to learn much 'cause we we're always playing.

...

John: Yeah, but you dunt [don't] really learn new skills by playing the sport, you've got to practice.

...

Chris: When you're doing skills, you'd just start to doing 'em better and then you just go straight in to a game.

(Focus Group: Y10 Participant: 1)

There was evidence, therefore, that early splits between the lads at ACS could be seen in PE lessons and that PE staff were aware of the need to amend their lesson content and delivery in response to this. It is perhaps not surprising that these differences became steadily more obvious towards year 9 and then much starker as the lads moved in to year 10 and 11 (KS4). In relation to PE specifically, the Performers undertook GCSE (Y10) and AS level (Y11) in complete isolation from their peers, whilst the remaining lads arrived together for option-based practical PE lessons related to their BTEC qualifications. In relation to this, therefore, the following section of this chapter will examine how each of the three lads groups experienced and viewed PE at ACS as well as how each groups' actions and attitudes came to impact on the ways that their PE staff structured the curriculum and delivered their lessons.

Problematic lads in PE

PE lessons at Y10 and Y11 were split between theory and practical sessions that were all delivered as part of the lads BTEC Sport course. While theory lessons were academically streamed based on their school Leaders groups (e.g. Resourceful and Skilful together) practical lessons involved the lads being able to choose from one of two 'sporting' options at the start of each term (in 6 week 'blocks'). As the Performer group were separated from their peers, it was solely the Participant and Problematic lads who were presented with these two activity options, with one of these invariably consisting of outdoor football.

Despite the binary nature of this choice, the 'selections' that were ultimately taken by the lads appeared to be based on range of conscious and subconscious issues and influences. Ultimately, however, it was evident early on that the football 'option' group was made up almost entirely of the Problematic lads.

Problematic lads: Football

From the very outset it was consistently evident that the KS4 outdoor football lessons, that involved almost solely Problematic lads, were fast-paced, aggressive, and highly physical in nature. Whilst challenges for the ball were strong and full-blooded, there was very little obvious and intentional foul play. Recipients of heavily tackles rarely complained, preferring instead to simply get up and re-join the game. Observations throughout the course of the study consistently focused on these lessons whenever they took place, and on almost every occasion they involved the playing of a full-sided game using the full-size goals. No skill-related drills or formal warm ups were ever observed. Once the lads chose the teams the level of competition between teams was fierce and their commitment to winning and performing well was very clear. Lads who did not appear to be fully committed to the rest of the team or were seen to be underperforming were more often than not berated and often verbally abused. The consistency of the characteristics of these practical lessons at both Y10 and Y11 was uncanny, to the point that specific notes were seldom made after the first several weeks, such was the similarity between these lessons.

In relation to this, students acknowledged that the competitive nature of the games of football was an important aspect of the lesson. In focus group responses Y10 Problematic lads (2) confirmed this:

ASc: ...Is it (football) important to you, because it seems quite serious? I mean you're not in kits but do you seem to take it quite seriously when you're playing?

Shane: Yeah.

Levi: It's competitive.

...

ASc: ...It seems like you're pretty competitive it seems like you don't want to lose. Is it? Why is it so competitive cause you're only down there? Nobody's watching you.

Corey: For the people who like football and know how to play it it's reyt [really] competitive.

...

ASc: Is it important to you to be winning?

Bailey: Oh Yeah... it's better to win than to lose in't [isn't] it.

(Focus Group: Y10 Problematic: 2)

From observations in particular, it seemed that aggression, ability, and physicality whilst playing football in PE was seen as a 'badge of masculine honour' between the lads. This not only led to a certain level of acceptance within the group, but in some cases led to an elevated level of status for those able to consistently demonstrate these traits.

Observations and focus group responses also suggested that the final outcome (result) was by far the most important focus of the lesson as opposed to skill development. The learning of new information regarding the game was not valued and in many cases was often dismissed out of hand by these Problematic lads when skill-based activities offered by staff. This approach and attitude was something that the PE staff acknowledged:

Rich: They don't want to learn anything and they don't want to do anything apart from play a match, have their mates on the same team and dominate...

Phil:...They just didn't have those skills that we needed to make them successful, they couldn't listen, they couldn't stay on task but I suppose once they're playing a game or whatever they're fine.

...

Paul:...I don't know about the others but we don't particularly like teaching football and the reason for that is they think they know it all, especially as they get older. So when you do skill development, they listen to you but you can tell they start listening to you and they're thinking 'yeah, I know this already'. So they think that they don't need to do skill development, they think that they're as good as anyone else in the world. That's why they prefer the competitive game because they think that they can show it, rather than having to learn it.

(Staff Focus Group)

In relation to the nature of the lessons and the reluctance of the Problematic lads to receive any form of guidance and direction, it was clear that the playing of full-sided, competitive games was the main reason for the Problematic lads (Y10: 1) wanting to 'choose' football in PE:

ASc: In terms of the sports that you like to do, do you prefer developing your skills or playing the game?

Lads: Playing t' game.

...

Wayne: No. I'd rather just have a game.

ASc: So if you found out that you were doing heading...?

Wayne: I would just go down on the astro, get a ball and start doing kick ups.

ASc: Until it was ready for a game?

Wayne: Yeah.

(Focus Group: Y10 Problematic: 1)

In addition, the second Y10 Problematic group support this attitude:

Levi: ...It'll be boring if we dunt [don't] do any games.

ASc: So I take it you prefer to do the games?

Levi: Yeah, miles better than training. Nowt [nothing] wrong wi' that is the' [their]?

Karl: It'd be a bit boring (if we did skill sessions).

Levi: Yeah 'cause some people know ar [how] to do it it's just others who dunt [don't].

(Focus Group: Y10 Problematic: 2)

Therefore, in almost all cases, whilst lessons were essentially led by the lads and played in a very physical and competitive manner, engagement and participation was high. The lads clearly took a great deal from playing football competitively, on a large pitch alongside their peers and friends. It appeared partly due to this that the Problematic lads in KS4 were extremely reluctant to play anything else other than football. In fact, as the study progressed a range of evidence demonstrated that the Problematic lads in both Y10 and Y11 would blatantly refuse to play anything else other than football during their practical PE lessons. Initial signs of this attitude from the Problematic lads began to emerge very early on in the study with guided conversation responses from staff stating that "these lads (Y10 Problematic) don't want to know unless it's football" (Paul: 5th February) and Phil saying that "It's more like the tail wagging the dog...they (Y11 Problematic) won't play anything else (other than football)" (Phil: 5th February)

In relation to this, both Participant and Performer lads described seeing incidents of truancy, disruptive behaviour, or even self-extraction from lessons on the part of the Problematic group if football was not offered. In some cases, lads described the more

Problematic lads simply walking out of the changing rooms in response to being told that they would not be playing football or simply not turning up to the lesson at all:

Mark: They (Problematic lads) just don't turn up.

ASc: So they will know in advance what they're doing and not turn up. How do you not turn up in this school?

John: Just walk round school and not turn up.

Paul: Just go on t'field and wag it [play truant].

...

John: There are gaps in the fence so you can just go out on to the field and get art [out].

(Focus Group: Y10 Participant: 1)

There was also evidence to suggest that the Y10 Performers had witnessed similar behaviour:

Finley: Some lads are like why can't we do football? Reyt up wit' lip [confronting staff] like we wanna do it.

...

Jacob: They'd (Problematic) walk off.

Ollie: They'd (Problematic) kick off basically.

...

ASc: Yeah. You said Josh (G) that they would just walk off.

Jacob: Yeah, basically if they (Problematic) don't like something or they don't get their own way they just walk off.

(Focus Group: Y10 Performer: 1)

As well as the lads in the mixed Y9 focus group:

Scott: Some people might get mornjy [upset] and walk off.

ASc: Some people might just walk off? Walk off literally...?

Lucas: Just walk off.

ASc: Just walk off, what do you mean Nathan, out of school?

Lucas: No, they'll just walk out of the lesson and then they'll just walk round everywhere.

(Focus Group: Y9 Mixed)

And the second Y10 Participant group:

ASc: Josh, you said you'd probably just see them walk off, did you see that happen?

Anthony: Yeah, I saw it happen a few times. Like they'd get angry and just storm art [out].

...

Daniel: Yeah, they would just sit there.

Ryan: There would be some that would just walk off, there'd be some who would just sit theyr and say 'reyt [right] well I'm not doing it then' and there'd be the occasional few who would say 'reyt [right] we're doing this, this week and then actually do it.

(Focus Group: Y10 Participant: 2)

In addition, several Participant lads also spoke retrospectively of the ways in which the Problematic lads would purposively disrupt KS3 PE lessons that did not involve football:

Oliver: And then when they do actually get in to table tennis because they're upset about not doing football, they wouldn't tek [take] it seriously and just mess abart [about] with the table tennis equipment.

Ryan: Yeah, cause like in the old building we used to play in t'changing rooms 'cause of t'gaps, you'd try to have a game and they'd just come over, tek [take] t'ball and just throw it.

Daniel: It's like if they cunt [couldn't] have fun or owt [anything] no one could.

(Focus Group: Y10 Participant: 2)

Participant group 1 also described this type of behaviour:

Will: They'd either not do it and they'd just be reyt [really] aggressive whilst they were doing it. Like in hockey they would go for your ankles a lot just because they could.

Ollie: Because it were a laugh.

(Focus Group: Y10 Performer: 1)

Interestingly, the Problematic lads themselves also acknowledged their own behaviour in response to not being able to play football in PE:

Bailey: I'd just sit down on t'floor and not do it.

Levi: I'd probably just sit and watch.

ASc: Just sit on t'floor and you'd probably not go at all Brandon?

Levi: I probably would but probably not take part in it. I'd just sit and watch.

(Focus Group: Y10 Problematic: 2)

The other Problematic group also suggested that they would respond in a similar way:

Wayne: I just jump over t'gate or go through t'metal fence.

Kaden: Or go through t'gap.

Wayne: No but it's been blocked off nar [now] so we have to jump over.

Kaden: Yeah but there's another gap nar [now]. Do you know where the other gap is?

Wayne: Why would you walk reyt [right] across t' field to go through that gap?

Kaden: To get through the gap.

Wayne: Yeah, because you can't climb over the spiky fence.

(Focus Group: Y10 Problematic: 1)

Perhaps most surprising, however, was the fact that some of the Problematic lads would actually prefer not to do any physical activity at all if faced with the prospect of not playing football in PE:

Riley: I'd rather do theory.

Troy: To tell you t' truth, I wunt [wouldn't] turn up.

ASc: You wouldn't turn up?

Riley: Do theory.

Danny: In fact yeah, I'd just do theory work.

ASc: So the option is there for you to not do practical and so if it was something you didn't want to do, you would...?

Riley: Do theory.

(Focus Group: Y11 Problematic: 1)

In some of the more extreme examples there were even responses that suggested certain Problematic lads may purposefully get removed from lessons and taken to the isolation room so that they would no longer need to participate:

Shane: I'd start hitting people and that.

Levi: Start messing abart [about].

Bailey: Geing [giving] teachers jip [being confrontational with PE staff] and that in it?

(Focus Group: Y10 Problematic: 2)

In relation to the Problematic lads' responses and attitudes highlighted above, it was equally evident that staff were well aware of the responses when not offered football in PE. As part of a guided conversation, Rich (Tuesday 5th February) suggested that the Y10 Problematic lads would "just say 'fuck off' sir!" if told that they were playing hockey instead of football. In addition, Rich also alluded to the fact that the Problematic lads were able to influence the day-to-day actions of the PE staff during a brief guided conversation:

ASc: I don't suppose this lot will be doing cricket will they?

Rich To be honest mate, they'll do whatever they decide they want to do.

(Guided Conversation: Rich - Thursday 9th May)

This issue was further supported by responses to similar questions in the staff focus group:

Rich: Those particular lads in that group, they are the main concern. They are the ones who will literally walk out of the changing room and truant or swear and say I'm not doing it or just sit there (if they can't play football) and removing them is just pointless isn't it because half the time that's what they want you to do...going back

to those year 10s, we've done football virtually every lesson, all year...it's the only thing they want to do (football) and they make the decision some of the time as to whether they're going to do the lesson or not.

...

Paul: There is a group of lads that if football wasn't an option...we wouldn't be able to teach them practical.

Rich: No, we wouldn't be able to teach them practical.

(Staff Focus Group)

There was also a sense of awareness and a degree of acknowledgment among PE staff that whilst pupils at other (more middle-class) schools may also lack enthusiasm towards certain activity areas, they would be much more inclined to simply comply to staff instructions compared to the Problematic lads at ACS:

Phil: They would just do it (middle-class lads) because they would feel that they had to do it I suppose. But because a lot of our students vote with their feet, they don't bring their kit, they do verbalise what they do and don't want to do. I suppose in a middle-class leafy suburb you wouldn't get that. If you knew that you were on for five weeks of cross-country, you'd do five weeks of cross-country, come whatever weather. Here? Not a chance.

(Staff Focus Group)

In addition to the apparent ability of the Problematic lads to dictate the content of their practical PE lessons towards football, it was also evident from observations and focus group responses that the Problematic groups were also able to influence the PE staff in relation to the nature and delivery of their football lessons. In the first instance, there was always a strong insistence that games had to utilise the full pitch and large goals, even when pupil numbers were low (e.g. 7v7). More generally, however, observations consistently highlighted the fact that the lads were able to get away with particular aspects of disruptive and confrontational behaviour. In relation to this, the PE staff readily acknowledged that their expectations of the Problematic lads' behaviour in particular had been directly influenced by the lads' attitudes and actions in lessons:

Rich: I think, speaking for myself, I'd like to think that I've got high expectations when I come in every day but realistically I know that I ain't going to hit those expectations. But, I'd like to think that every day when I come in I'm like 'right, we'll go again and we'll see what we can do'.

ASc: Do you think then that whilst you've got those expectations they are slightly different (for the Problematic lads)?

Rich: Subconsciously they probably are. I'd like to think no but they probably are going to be aren't they, that's just my personal...

Paul: I think that we aim to get the best out of what we've got to work with.

Rich: Yeah, what we've got.

...

Paul: They're probably not the expectations that you go through University thinking that you're going to have, but then when you start working in a school and you realise what sort of pupils that you're working with, you just want to make them the best that you can make them. In terms of expectations you want a school where no one is going to swear and no one is going to challenge you but it's not realistic here...rightly or wrongly in terms of expectations, I will have very different expectations of my daughter when she goes to school as what I've got of some of the pupils here.

(Staff Focus Group)

As an extension to these 'expectations', the use of bad language was also common amongst the Problematic lads in particular, and to a large extent this was generally 'accepted' by the PE staff. One of the primary reasons for this appeared to relate the PE staff viewing such language simply as an extension of their broader lives that evidently became accentuated in competitive situations. For Phil, the persistent swearing among his Y11 group was simply "part of their language" and something that they were used to "doing so often at home". In addition, Rich also suggested (whilst observing his group play football) that swearing seemed to be "completely natural to them" and even that he may have had a cathartic effect in the sense that it enabled them to "let off a bit of steam". Similar views were aired in the staff focus group:

Phil: Swearing, I think that we let a lot of swearing go. I mean it's the low level disruption isn't it. You wouldn't have that low level disruption in perhaps a classroom lesson, but swearing on a school field, we perhaps hear it a lot of the time but do you address it?

Paul: I don't. I maybe talk to them about it.

Phil: Of course you do, but you don't make a...

Rich: You hear it, or I hear it when we're out there, particularly football again and I'll speak to lads about it, but I'm also realistic in that when I play football I probably swear. I'm not saying it's alright to do it but... you've got to think that I'd probably do.

Alex: But, it's going towards KS4 isn't it where we are treating them more like adults and it's that different type of swearing in't it? There's a difference between having a shot and missing and me saying something to you and it's that what...

Rich: I mean we try and say it's not right but obviously it happens dunt it and they can see it happening on tele', they can lip read when it happens so you've got to be realistic as well.

In addition to bad language, 'adapting' rules on kit for the lads in these groups also appeared to be something that enabled the staff to manage the constraints imposed on them by the Problematic lads. In one particular lesson several Problematic Y11 lads were simply asked to remove their ties in order to be allowed to play indoor football - a situation which Phil stated "wasn't ideal, [but] at least they were active and out of trouble'. Subsequent observations with similar groups throughout the study also highlighted the fact that Problematic lads taking part in practical PE lessons without getting changed had become the norm, as did focus group responses:

Rich: It's a difficult one the kit situation to be honest. I don't know whether letting them do it in their uniform means that they just stop bringing their kit, but at least they're doing something and they're generally out of trouble. If we stopped them doing it what would they be doing? Probably just causing trouble and disrupting things.

(Staff Focus Group)

Such an approach to kit was seen as a 'calculated gamble' in an attempt to promote higher levels of participation and lower disruptive incidents:

Phil: I think we kind of could make a rod for our own back here ...(but) if there's going to be a battle, instead of having that battle and having that confrontation, you might say right borrow a top or you can wear your trousers this week, and of course that has a knock on effect, but we might possibly have more kids engaging solidly in the lesson because we've allowed them, but I think we do let the boys get away with more than they should do.

(Staff Focus Group)

In relation to this approach to kit, PE staff acknowledged a largely positive impact on participation:

Rich: I think, and again this is just my personal opinion, I think lads not bringing kit might have a little knock on effect but I don't think the lads have made the link that we'll let 'em play anyway. I think they just on the whole still bring their kit.

...

Paul: I've also never heard a lad say "he never brings his kit and he gets away with it".

ASc: Yeah, I've not heard that either since I've been here, that's really interesting.
(Staff Focus Group)

From the lads' perspective, however, it did seem that the more 'significant' Problematic lads in particular were well aware that failing to bring kit would not necessarily exclude them from participating in PE, and this had become more evident as they moved through school:

Bailey: I always forget mi' kit, always. But I still play.

...

Bailey: They dint [didn't] used to. They used to get you to sit at t'side whilst everybody else played football.

Karl: Or get you to write the lines. Same lines all t'time...it was about year 8 though when you used to do that lines thing.

ASc: What do you think made 'em change their mind a little bit and let you take part without your kit on?

Bailey: Because they know that everybody forgets abart [about] their kit so they might as well just let 'em play.

(Focus Group: Y10 Problematic: 2)

This was also the case for the other Y10 Problematic group:

ASc:... I've noticed that people don't always bring a kit to get changed in to. Is that that accurate to say?

Wayne: I always forget me.

...

ASc: And are you allowed to take part if you haven't got your kit?

Mackenzie: Yeah, but you're got to take your jumper and tie off.

Wayne: Yeah, because I can't be bothered to carry my kit around wi' me all day.

(Focus Group: Y10 Problematic: 1)

Overall, therefore, it did seem that the majority of the Problematic lads were happy to acknowledge the fact that they were getting what they wanted, in the manner that they wanted it, and very much on their own terms regarding their behaviour, language, and kit:

Levi: The nicer you are the less chance you get to do what you want, int [isn't] it?

(Focus Group: Y10 Problematic: 2)

As an extension to this response from Levi, there was also evidence to suggest that the Problematic lads were very much aware that the PE teachers often altered their behaviour, actions, and expectations as a way of 'keeping everybody happy':

ASc: Why do you think that they offer you football as an option?

Levi: Everybody likes it.

Shane: Because most of us like playing football.

...

Tyler: It makes it easier for us and them.

Levi: Better, because everybody joins in and that.

Karl: Then we won't get in a mood or...

ASc: So everybody's happy then basically?

Lads: Yeah.

(Focus Group: Y10 Problematic: 2)

However, although there was evidence that the Problematic lads were strongly influencing the actions of the PE staff, observations suggested that the teachers were actually more in control of this situation than first thought. Whilst staff did admit that such a narrow curriculum for the Problematic lads was not ideal:

Rich: It doesn't sit comfortably with me really. I know that we should be getting them to do a whole lot more, but they've given up on doing anything else by this stage.

(Guided Conversation: Rich - Thursday 26th February)

the PE staff were benefiting from providing the Problematics with their preferred 'choice' of football. In the first instance, football-based PE lessons appeared to closely match the sporting, educational, and personal backgrounds of the PE staff whose own working-class backgrounds had evidently led them to generate a strong affinity for football. As a result, and by their own admission, it did seem that their interest and confidence surrounding football was something that had come to impact directly on their day-to-day teaching and even the 'identity' of the PE department itself:

Phil: A lot of people sat round here are football orientated people, not rugby...you hear about rugby schools and football schools and I kind of think that this school for a long time has been a football school because of our own backgrounds and interests.

(Staff Focus Group)

There was also evidence to suggest that the PE teachers at ACS were willing (and able) to 'control' additional aspects of the relatively lengthy 90-minute lesson as part of a direct attempt to limit negative behaviour among the lads. In the first instance, PE staff would often alter their stance towards certain aspects of the Problematic lads' behaviour in an attempt to assert some form of control over the start time, and subsequent duration of the lesson. Whilst the PE staff never reprimanded the Problematic lads for their tardiness to lessons, they did very often demonstrate a strong and consistent stipulation that the register had to be completed in silence at the start of the lesson. Whilst the register did eventually get done due to the lads' strong desire to go out and play football, the PE staff were able (if/when required) to re-start the register in response to varying levels of disruption which ranged from overt conversations to coughing. As a result this extended the time spent in the changing room. When questioned about this tactic, Rich responded that:

I generally wait until they realise that they need to get themselves sorted. It will happen soon. There's no pressing issue from me because an hour and half is just too long for this lot...these lads just can't concentrate for the full hour and an half...that's when the problems start.

(Guided Conversation: Rich - Thursday 11th April :).

Due to this approach by PE staff regarding the completion of the register as well as an often 'relaxed' attitude towards the Problematic lads selecting their teams ahead of the game, it was not uncommon for football matches between the lads to begin a full 30 minutes after the official start of the lesson. Perhaps surprisingly in relation to this, the Problematic lads appeared to be well aware of the impact of their actions on the duration of their lesson. However, this did not seem to lead to any subsequent improvement in their punctuality to lessons or behaviour in the changing rooms:

Dane: It teks [takes] ages to start a lesson.

ASc: Why does it take ages to start a lesson Dane?

Dane: 'Cause everybody's just talking, then they shut up and then they start talking, and then they start talking again...It just wastes half of't lesson..It's the register that teks [takes] ages.

(Focus Group: Y11 Problematic: 1)

This was also something that the Y10 Problematic (2) lads alluded to:

ASc: I've also noticed that it takes quite a long time for you to get down on to, not necessarily you lot but generally it usually about half an hour in to the lesson.

Shane: 'Cause it teks [takes] ages for us to shut up and that.

Karl: 'Cause there's always people talking in't there.

Bailey: And they dunt [don't] do t'register until everybody's quiet.

ASc: Yeah, and that takes a bit of time does it?

Shane: If t'teacher just got on wit' register though it would be better.

ASc: Do you think an hour and a half is too long for you to play football for though?

Lads: No.

Shane: No 'cause it teksusabrt [takes us about] half an hour to get darn ont' azzie [on the astroturf].

Tyler: Them (sic) hour lessons were reyt [really] bad last year because by t'time you'd got changed you had to go back.

(Focus Group: Y10 Problematic: 2)

Another way in which PE staff were willing and able to adapt their actions in lessons with the Problematic lads related more specifically to the one or two most prominent Problematic lads in each lesson. In short, it seemed that staff were willing, and able, to utilise the status of certain Problematic lads in order to then gain control over the rest of the group. PE staff did regularly highlight the fact that the level of fear and respect held by certain Problematic lads far exceeded anything that the PE staff themselves could exert:

ASc: Is it a common theme, one or two lads dominating the lesson?"

Paul: Yes, it's really common. What he says goes. There was a lad in year 11 last year who everyone was scared of. Even I was a bit scared of him. The games (football) became a bit of a joke really because he'd pick the ball up from the 'keeper and it was like the parting of the Red Sea. Not only did people dare not tackle him, if they did he would go back and hit them. I ended up joining in to mark him just so we could play a game.

(Guided Conversation: Paul – PE teacher)

In addition, there was also a suggestion that the actions of most Problematic lads in each group and year were able to exert a strong influence over the rest:

Paul: Oh yes definitely that's right, but the lads have so much influence on each other too. See that lad over there? He's a great lad on his own and he's been fine whilst he's been in here. A bit daft, but generally fine but if Bailey was in here, he'd be playing up to him and trying to impress him and make him laugh. You'd see a real change in him. My relationship with him would change. He'd be disobeying me and trying to make me look daft to try and impress Bailey.

ASc: What, almost as if he values Bailey's approval over yours?

Paul: Oh definitely, there's no doubt that he prefers Baileys approval over mine, it happens all the time. To be honest you can't really blame him. He'll be out on the streets tonight and he'll want Bailey on his side. It's the same was Omar, he's real top dog. When he's in the changing room it's so funny watching all the lads trying to impress him. To be fair he is a bit of a character and a tough lad. He will sometimes get changed and then find out what we're doing and then say "Oh fuck that" and refuse to do it.

ASc: And does that influence any of the others?

Paul: Totally, quite a few will respond to what he does and says, again, to try and impress him.

(Guided Conversation: Paul – PE teacher)

Therefore, the PE staff were well aware of the influence of these most prominent Problematic lads over the rest of the group which in most cases was much greater than their own, and the need to then utilise this situation to their own advantage:

Phil: if it's the influential lads who buy in to it straight away then it's a winner, because if they're doing it, then all the others will follow them as well.

(Staff Focus Group)

As a result, it was common to see the 'tactical ignoring' of the behaviour and language of a selected few in an attempt to placate and appease the most influential Problematic lads. Therefore, there was evidence to suggest that by avoiding confrontation with the most prominent Problematic pupils, these lads not only remained engaged and involved in the lesson, but also positively influenced the rest of the group to do the same. Interestingly, not only were the majority of the group often aware of this:

Riley: It's like Darren i'nt it. If Darren does it he dunt [doesn't] get done but if we did it, it would be different.

ASc: So you're saying that particular students will get a little bit more slack?

Riley: Yeah.

Dane: 'Cause it's expected of 'em, they know what they're like.

(Focus Group: Y11 Problematic: 1)

But in one specific example, the lad in question also demonstrated awareness that this was indeed the case. In response to the apparent frustration of several others with the favouritism and rule bias towards Darren, this prominent lad in question responded by stating: "I make the rules, not the teacher"

Teacher – pupil relationships: Problematic lads

Overall, the evidence suggested that a largely positive relationship existed between the Problematic lads and their PE teachers:

ASc: How would you describe your relationship with the PE teachers?

Wayne: Mr Owens, he's best teacher him. I get on wi' him.

Jay: They're reyt [really] easy to get along with.

Kaden: They have a laugh and that.

ASc: What about PE teachers compared to normal teachers?

Jay: They're better. They're easier to get along wi'.

(Focus Group: Y10 Problematic: 1)

The Y11 Problematic lads also spoke of a similarly positive relationship with their PE teachers:

Dane: He's (Paul) just like one of us really.

ASc: Are there any other PE teachers like that in the department?

Danny: Mr Outwood.

Riley: He's probably one of ar best PE teachers.

Troy: I wish we still had 'im me. Year 10, I just though year 10 were a reyt [good] laugh.

Danny: Mr Owens' alreyt [alright] as well.

(Focus Group: Y11 Problematic: 1)

In addition, there was also evidence to suggest that the PE staff acknowledged this positive relationship between them and the Problematic lads and that this was something that had developed as a result of work hard and some negotiation on the part of the PE teachers. Within the staff focus group, Rich suggested that a good relationship between PE staff and the more difficult male pupils was something that was a common feature of many schools:

Rich: I think that happens quite a bit in schools naturally doesn't it? I think PE staff have that kind of personality and they're the kind of people who have a bit more banter with the kids, are a bit more light hearted and I think the nature of the subject, a lot of the time, helps us.

(Staff Focus Group)

Phil also stated that the Problematic lads in particular seemed to value this type of relationship, especially as they got older, and this was something that the PE staff were often keen to develop as the lads move in to KS4:

Phil: ...Maybe in year 10, maybe when they come back after the summer, that they sort of switch on to what we're getting at and they buy in to the fact that if they talk to us properly, they don't muck around then we'll have more banter with them on a more 'bloke' type of level which we do do. Some of the kids don't get it and they leave school not getting it, but the majority do...

Rich: Yeah I agree.

(Staff Focus Group)

Amicable conversations, joke telling, and friendly banter with their PE teachers was also very common - both before and during lessons - which included the mimicry of the lads colloquialisms and slang by Phil and Rich, and light-hearted banter regarding Paul's 'un-cool' and 'cheap' choice of trainers by several Problematic Y11s. There was also evidence to suggest that the age and social backgrounds of the PE staff may well have led the PE staff to becoming acceptable to the Problematic lads with three of the four full time PE staff (Rich, Paul and Alex) under the age of 35 having also been born and raised in the same town. Consequently, these PE staff demonstrated a strong knowledge and affinity with the local area, had a similar accent, and even supported the same football team. However, despite all this, the PE staff acknowledged the negative impact that the current structure and delivery of PE with the Problematic lads was having (and would continue to do so) on the lads' sporting repertoires:

Phil: It's detrimental, it's detrimental to their lifelong participation. I see the lads that used to play football going in to the gym now, going to the gym and getting massive and these were our football lads. Football was their way of life. I don't know if they still play football for a club but I don't think that they do.

Alex: ...Because we're only offering them football, once they start to drop out of football or once they've got loads of stuff going on in their life, they're going out on a Friday or Saturday so they've no longer got to get up, but they're not having that sport...they get out of the habit of it don't they.

(Staff Focus Group)

Dismissal of other activities

Whilst football was quite clearly the preferred activity choice of the Problematic lads, several lads did suggest that they would gladly spend some lessons in a fitness suite lifting weights as they had done in the previous school building:

ASc: Well for some reason they've built this lovely new school and not put a gym in it. Is that something that you would have like to go in?

Bailey: Yeah, I would have loved it.

Levi: Yeah.

ASc: Do you go t'gym Tom outside of school?

Bailey: Yeah.

ASc: Anybody else who would have loved gonna [going] t'gym.

Levi: Yeah, ar [I] would 'av.

(Focus Group: Y10 Problematic: 2)

Interestingly, however, the Problematic lads dismissed most other activities (other than football) out of hand, which included a range of activities that had the potential to match the masculine and physical traits that the lads valued so highly (e.g. rugby):

ASc: Is there anything that you dunt [don't] like about PE, any sports that...

Levi: I don't like rugby.

Karl: Basketball.

Tyler: Basketball and rugby.

...

Shane: Cricket.

Levi: Yeah, cricket.

Karl: Rounders.

(Focus Group: Y10 Problematic: 2)

There was also a similar range of activities that were unpopular with the Y10 Problematic (1) lads:

ASc: Are there any activities that you dunt [don't] like? For example you came back after Easter and you teacher said, right for the next six weeks we're going to be doing...?

Zak: Rugby.

Mackenzie: Basketball.

ASc: Rugby? Basketball? Why don't you like Basketball Mackenzie?

Mackenzie: It's just boring.

Zak: It is a bad sport that.

(Focus Group: Y10 Problematic: 1)

The reason for this negative attitude towards most sports (other than football) seemed to relate to the Problematic lads' lack of experience, knowledge, or ability in these activities

(e.g. cricket). In one particular instance, some Y10 Problematic lads suggested that not wanting to play cricket at KS4 related to not knowing how:

ASc: Why didn't you like cricket and rounders?

Corey: Boring.

Shane: 'Cause it (cricket) were (sic) weird, 'cause nobody knew how to throw the ball or owt.

ASc: Nobody knew how to bowl?

Shane: Yeah, that's it, bowl

(Focus Group: Y10 Problematic: 2)

One additional factor in influencing this apparent reluctance to play most sports appeared to relate to the perceived 'risks' relating to the possibility of being seen to fail in front of their peer group. As a result, it did seem that Problematic lads had consciously avoided certain sports, whilst strongly favouring football, as a way of ensuring some form of 'success', and this was something that PE staff were very much aware of:

Alex I've found kids where when we are doing athletics and high jump they will say oh, I'm injured, I can't do this and I think it's because they don't want to lose face. I don't want to try something new that I might not be the best at. Your typical football lads and that kind of stuff. I might not be best at it so they say that they are injured but then they are like, oh can I have a go at this sir? And I'm like 'well no, you're injured aren't ya'? I think they don't want to lose a bit of face sometimes, I think they don't want to..

Paul: ...But again it comes back to taking them out of their comfort zone because they'd love to go and play football every lesson a lot of them.

Alex: Yeah, I think it's because they don't want to fail. I think they've got that idea and that that they can't fail at stuff but it's not that they're excelling at every sport, it's that they pick and choose the sports that they want to be seen excelling at.

...

Paul: Saving face.

Alex: Yeah, I think it comes back to that idea that they don't want to fail at something, so rather than put themselves in a situation to fail they'll remove themselves from it and not try something.

(Staff Focus Group)

There was also evidence from the PE staff to suggest that even when the Problematic lads had briefly attempted 'new' activities, a lack of immediate success on their part was generally met with a refusal to continue:

Rich: I think with some of them, if they then have a go at it and can't do it, but they're not willing to learn, they just think oh, it's crap Tennis, I don't want to play it.

Phil: I think they give up quite easily, they do give up quite easily our students. I am speaking for the ones I teach, but if they can't do it they'll display extreme behaviours, they'll sulk about it or they'll just refer back to type and just do what they want to do anyway.
(Staff Focus Group)

Not wanting to lose face was a common theme in many lesson observations. In one case, there was a very high drop out during a timed 1500m run as lads began to realise that their physical fitness would be exposed, with a similar outcome during a Royal Marine-led fitness session. In most cases excuses were presented ("If it wasn't for my ankle I would have smashed it" and "Those fags are killing me") or that lads attributed a lack of value to finishing ("What's the point in sweating my balls off just before dinner?"). Such a response to the perceived and/or actual risk of failure in public was even more evident at the town athletics championships in the summer where several of the more Problematic lads from Y9, 10, and 11 agreed to compete ("I'll do anything as long as we get the day off school") but only in the 4x100m relay team where individual failure could be minimised, with their attendance at the event still being justified.

Participant lads in PE

The Participant group of lads had their timetabled PE lessons alongside the Problematic group in KS4 where all pupils were required to 'choose' their option for the forthcoming six-week block. In almost all cases, the vast majority of the Participant group selected the 'non-football' option which resulted in them taking part in a range of activities during the course of the study (table tennis, basketball, tennis). Once these choices had been made, the Participant lads generally got changed quickly and the levels of participation amongst the group were generally very high.

In relation to the existent of the Participant group specifically, the staff were very much aware that such a 'divide' between the lads existed:

Paul: I suppose we've always known that they are there, but I've never really given it much thought until you mentioned it. There is definitely a group of lads, yeah, that come in and get changed, do what they need to do and then go without ever really being a problem.

(Guided Conversation: Paul – Thursday 28th February)

In relation to the lads themselves there was evidence to suggest that the Participant lads currently enjoyed their PE lessons:

Oliver: ...I wake up and I think an hour and half of PE and you're like 'yes'.

Ryan: Best way to start a Monday off really (PE lesson), instead of having English or summat [something].

ASc: So if you had to rank PE as one of your subjects where do you think PE would be if you had to write a list of your favourite lessons?

Oliver: Top.

Ryan: Top.

Daniel: Third.

ASc: Neil, third? behind?

Daniel: Triple science and science.

ASc: Science eh, science bod? Anthony, where would it rank on your list?

Anthony: Abart [about] third...(behind) computer science and ICT.

ASc: Brill, anybody else not at the top.

Richard: Same as Anthony.

(Focus Group: Y10 Participant: 2)

And more specifically, this seemed to due, in part, to the range of 'new' activities that they had able to take part in:

ASc: What other sports do you enjoy in PE?

Ryan: Cricket and rugby.

Athony: Hockey.

Daniel: Hockey.

(Focus Group: Y10 Participant: 2)

Similarly, for Y10 Participant group (1):

ASc: Is there anything else that you like in PE?

John: Cricket.

Mark: Basketball.

David: Tennis.

Chris: Badminton.

(Focus Group: Y10 Participant: 1)

From a PE staff perspective, there was evidence from several guided conversations that they were aware of the apparent isolation of the Participant lads from the Problematics in

KS4 activity choices. It was also evident that the PE staff particularly enjoyed the opportunity to teach “proper lessons” to the Participant lads where lessons were evidently structured in a way that allowed for skill development, peer-assessment, and differentiated tasks. In a Y10 table tennis lesson made up almost entirely of Participant lads, Paul was able to deliver a well-structured, task-based lesson that involved progressive practices, differentiated tasks, and the use of an interactive white board to aid and support learning. This was something that he mentioned on my arrival to the latter part of this lessons without being prompted:

I’ve just actually taught them a lesson. Objectives, progress, and everything. The sad thing is that I couldn’t have done that if they were all together, no way. It’s funny; I have to assess the group before I plan the lesson. It’s the wrong way round really.
(Guided Conversation: Paul – PE teacher)

Overall, therefore, it seemed that the Participant lads had been provided with an opportunity to play ‘new’ sports and further develop their skills and knowledge as part of more skill-based lessons, away from the constraining influence of the more Problematic lads. However, there was also evidence to suggest that the activity ‘choices’ made by the Participant lads in KS4 PE were not necessarily based on a desire to expand their knowledge and skills across the subject. Instead, the evidence highlighted the fact that the decision to take part in the ‘non-football’ activity option was largely influenced by a desire to avoid participation alongside their Problematic peers and take part in a more positive learning environment alongside their friends. As a result, based on knowledge that the Problematic lads would almost always favour playing football in PE, the Participants consistently chose the other option and this pattern became evident at an early stage in the research:

I hate football with that lot. I wouldn’t have minded a game of football but it’s always too rough with them (Problematic lads) and they shout at us a lot...I’ve never really played table tennis, but it’s inside, I’m with my mates and it’s the last lesson of the day.
(Guided Conversation: Y10 Participant)

When this pattern was explained in more detail during the focus groups, the Participant lads' responses highlighted the fact that the majority of the Participant lads were much more inclined to base their entire activity option decisions not on what they would 'like' to do in their lessons PE, but instead what the Problematic lads were (or were not) doing:

ASc: Did you prefer that (KS3 curriculum) Anthony?

Anthony: No I prefer it like it is now because...if someone that you dont [don't] like goes in the other group you can choose a different one to them.

...

ASc: It's interesting, so would it be fair to say...that sometimes you would choose the other sport on offer, because of the people that are doing football.

Lads: Yeah.

(Focus Group: Y10 Participant: 2)

In the first instance this seemed to be as a result of the likelihood that the game/lesson would be overly physical and 'dirty' and by taking part the participant lads were often risking physical injury:

Phillip: Football...if for example everyone who are just like 'big shots' [prominent pupils] in school pick it, they can do dirty tackles and just get away with it so I'd pick a different sport.

ASc: And have you done that recently at all?

Phillip: I was picking basketball over football for about six weeks.

ASc: Brill. Richard you nodded your head there as well. Is that something that you might do?

Richard: Yeah, for the same reasons as Phillip.

(Focus Group: Y10 Participant: 2)

It also seemed that the Participant lads' choice of activity might actually be influenced by a fear of not being able to meet the high demands of the Problematic lads regarding the competitive and physical nature of the games that they played:

Ryan: Yeah, a lot of people do that. That's why a lot of people do basketball in't it. Because of all the Chav's who play football they dont [don't] want to, because if they do something wrong they're like 'you dick' and all stuff like that.

Daniel: Some people don't do it because they're not as good at the sport and if there are other people who are good at it and they're not so good at it, they don't want to do it because they don't want to make themselves look stupid.

(Focus Group: Y10 Participant: 2)

Another reason to suggest the KS4 PE activity 'choices' made by the Participants may not have been influenced by a desire to expand their skills, knowledge and sporting repertoires relates to an apparent favouring of football. Whilst their levels of engagement and attitudes to their current non-football PE lessons appeared to be largely positive, the majority of the Participant lads demonstrated a strong preference for football. When asked, responses that indicted a favouring of football were common among the Participant lads:

ASc: So in relation to that, what aspects of PE do you like the most? What sports do you like doing the best?

Paul: Football.

John: Football.

Mark: Football...rugby.

...

ASc: If you could all just play together would you choose football?

Alfie: Yeah, definitely.

(Focus Group: Y10 Participant: 1)

It was apparent, therefore, that many of the Participant lads would actually prefer the opportunity to play football among their preferred peers, not only in preference to taking part with the Problematics, but also instead of their current activity choices. The fact that the Participant lads appeared relatively happy to take part in their current lessons (although the opportunity to play football would have been preferred) was also something the staff were very much aware of. Initially comments regarding this issue were made in one particular lesson observation:

Paul: They (Participants) would probably like a game of football as a group but they don't want to be with the other lot, so they choose not to do football because the others do.

Rich: They're (Participants) probably only in there (sports hall) to keep out of the way of this lot. It's a shame really.

(Guided Conversation: Thursday 28th February)

Following these comments, this trend for the Participants to prefer football was also mentioned by Phil in the staff focus group:

Phil: I think going back to the football bit, I remember not so long ago I had a lesson with your typical football lads in it, but you had students who wanted to play football that wouldn't because of the lads who were in the football team and were almost taking over the lesson, and they were happy to play by themselves and not be part

of the main game because they felt intimidated by it and that might be a reason...I just think that most of the boys...that play football are quite boisterous, they're the ones that perhaps get in to a lot of trouble the sort of ones who are seen around school getting in to a lot of bother, they tend to be the ones who are quite good at football, perhaps because they're more confident and more cocky, but actually the ones who quite like football...still want to play it but they don't get in to trouble and they don't want to associate with the students who get in to trouble, so they want to stay away and be by themselves still playing the sport that they do actually love and enjoy and I think that they just want to step away from those boys.

Overall, therefore, the initially encouraging signs that emerged from early lesson observations regarding the Participant lads' positive engagement and attitudes towards a range of 'new' activities and skills in KS4 PE were largely ill founded. Instead, there was evidence to suggest that rather than being keen to expand their knowledge and skills across a variety of sports, the Participants were more likely to view their option-based KS4 PE lessons as a further opportunity to isolate themselves from their Problematic peers. Whilst they did engage well in their relatively varied PE curriculum, and often make good progress in the activities, it was also evident that the majority of the Participant group would have also preferred to be playing football in PE, and in manner quite similar to that of the Problematic lads in their year group.

Performer lads in PE

It was apparent from an early point in the study that the Performer lads were an isolated and select group that were made up exclusively from 'Future Leaders'. This meant that their timetables differed quite significantly from the rest of their peers in relation to the qualifications that they were undertaking (GCSEs and AS levels) and the fact that their PE lessons took place in mixed-sex environments. As a result of both these two issues, therefore, practical activities that had been selected by PE staff took place across a range of activities in order to address syllabus requirements and also reflected the mixed-sex make-up of teaching groups (e.g. volleyball).

Early lesson observations and time spent around the PE department highlighted the fact that these lads had a very positive attitude towards PE as a subject and a strong relationship with PE staff. An early lesson observation (Tuesday 29th January) with the Y11 group suggested that the lads had no issues with working in mixed-sex groups in order to complete tasks, were able to work independently in order to facilitate their own learning, and appeared genuinely keen to take the most from the lesson. A follow-up observation with the same group in a practical situation (Tuesday 26th February) highlighted very similar attitudes and behaviours during a structured volleyball lesson. The game was led and facilitated for long periods by the pupils themselves and there was no obvious evidence of gender bias or reluctance to take part from the Performer lads. When feedback was provided by the teacher (Alex) this was taken on board in a positive manner, and it was evident that the group, as a whole, had made good progress in this particular activity in recent weeks:

This group have come on so much in the last few weeks. You can see that they are effectively running themselves now and umpiring the games between them. I've spent a fair bit of time with them going through the key skills but they are keen to learn and do well so that was an enjoyable part to be honest. They are just getting used to game play now, but I think this and badminton will be the activities that we show in the moderation.

(Guided Conversation: Alex – PE teacher)

In addition although learning 'new' sports had seemingly sometimes taken a little 'persuasion', they had generally grown to accept and enjoy a greater range of 'less conventional' sports, especially in relation to many of their peers:

Shaun: ...You get to play new sports like volleyball that's something that we haven't done before.

Callum We've never played volleyball before have we?

Aaron: Nar [No] I like it.

Thomas: Well at first we couldn't really do it that properly so it weren't as good but then we got better. We get in to proper games now.

(Focus Group: Y11 Performers)

However, as stated previously it was evident that such a positive learning environment had not always been the case in their PE lessons (especially during KS3) with several

comments in Performers focus groups suggesting that they had felt as though their KS3 PE lessons had been constrained as a result of the Problematic lads actions in lessons:

Will: It's like as much as we like football it did get boring.

Ollie: Yeah, it would have been good to do other stuff because it did get boring after a bit.

Will: Yeah you need a variety of stuff, but with them (Problematics) in your lesson you can't do a variety of stuff because they can't be trusted and that affects us.

Ollie: And if they dunt [don't] want to do it at t'end of t'day they dunt [don't] do it do the'.

...

ASc:...Do you think in anyway that these pupils have stopped you in any way having even broader opportunities?

Ollie: Yeah, definitely.

Will: It's like last year we got told that we were going to go out of school and do rock climbing. I bet we won't be doing that anymore because of the behaviour of some people.

(Focus Group: Y10 Performers)

Overall, therefore, it seemed that the KS4 Performer lads had been able to utilise the 'freedom' from their Problematic peers in order to engage in a greater range of valued and enjoyable activities during PE lessons. They seemingly enjoyed the opportunity to develop their skills and knowledge across a range of sports, which was something that had proved extremely difficult in the past.

However, despite, the Performer lads' involvement in a relatively wide range of activities as part of their GCSE and AS level courses, there was little indication that this had increased the likelihood of them participating in these sports outside of school:

ASc: And when you've done the sport for six weeks and you're like 'I quite like this', what was the next step or the next opportunity for you to go on?

Aaron: Then you were like, back to square one again, you'd be like oh I don't like this, it's be hockey or summat [something].

ASc: But in terms of the rugby specifically, a lot of you said that you liked rugby...

Aaron: They tried setting up a club but not enough people'd go to it. It's only be people who proper loved doing rugby, they'd go.

Callum: Yeah, because most people were just happy to do it in PE.

ASc: So you liked it quite a bit, but not enough maybe to...

Shaun: Give your own time up for it.

Sam: Yeah, I like it, but, like, I weren't going to gi' [give] up mi' own time for it, like, 'cause like I weren't that big of a fan of it, but in mi' PE lessons I wunt ov [would not] minded doing it. If they said we were doing rugby, I'd be like, oh it's rugby it's alreyt [alright].

(Focus Group: Y11 Performers)

Indeed, this short-term positive attitude towards particular sports was something that the PE staff were well aware of:

They do play these sports in PE (volleyball) after a bit of encouragement and we manage to get them to a point where they are quite good and seem to enjoy it. It was the same with badminton and some tennis that we did last year. But you would never get them coming and asking to stay behind after school to use the sports hall to play (volleyball) or even wanting to go down and play on the tennis courts when its sunny. There are six tennis courts down there that nobody ever uses. They are just not bothered once they leave the lesson.

(Guided Conversation: Alex – Tuesday 26th February)

Therefore, there was evidence from both the lads and PE staff to suggest that Performers were not the distinct group of lads intent on developing their sporting repertoires that they first appeared to be. In fact, the Performers were much more inclined to do as they were told during PE lessons and it seemed that it was this acquiescence that led them to taking part in a range of activities during PE. There appeared to be no real overt desire to pursue these sports for their own sake or with a view to participating in them in the future.

Indeed, the direct influence of PE staff (Alex in particular), and the Performer lads' positive relationship with the PE department generally was the main reason behind their 'willingness' to participate in a greater range of activities in PE. More specifically this relationship between the Performers and PE staff seemed to be based on genuine respect for, and a liking of their PE teachers:

ASc: You've mentioned your PE teachers and all that, how would you describe your relationship with your PE staff?

Thomas: It's good wi' Mr Outwood.

James: Yeah, but it's good wi' Mr Woodkirk an' all, it's good wi' 'em [with them] all, they're

(Focus Group: Y11 Performers)

Also this positive response towards Alex (Mr Outwood) in particular, was evident with the Y10 Performer group:

ASc: So, lets see where we are now then. How would you describe your relationship with your PE teachers then, generally?

Ollie: Good, With Mr Outwood it's good.

Jacob: Yeah with Mr Outwood it's good. We had him in humanities, he was our form tutor and we had him in PE, so it's really strong with him.

Ollie: Yeah and he treats us like he'd treat a member of his family like but if we get out of control he'll control us.

(Focus Group: Y10 Performers)

Overall then, the Performer lads were much more used to being told what to do in lessons and similarly more inclined to respond positively to these requests - even when these did not always sit comfortably with the lads. This attitude to school, teachers generally, and Alex specifically, was not only something that the Performers were well aware of, but also something that the Y10 Performer group in particular were willing to accept:

ASc: If you were asked to do something (in PE) that you don't [didn't] quite want to do something or you don't [didn't] like it, you'd probably just do it anyway 'cause it were PE?

Ollie: Oh Yeah.

Will: Yeah.

ASc: Would that be the case for other lads in your year?

Lads: NO.

Alongside an obvious respect for their PE staff, it was evident that the Performers' engagement in a range of activities in KS4 PE was generally driven by their desire to achieve strong grades within the practical assessments that formed a significant part of their courses. Comments made by Alex at a very early stage in the research process suggested that the Performer lads' willingness to participate in the relatively wide range of activities (delivered as part of their KS4 PE lessons) was influenced by a desire to gain the very best marks possible. Therefore, comments stated that the Performer lads viewed the playing of games such as volleyball and tennis simply as a pragmatic and 'necessary evil' in the pursuit of good final practical grades:

This lot especially (Performers) have been transformed into exam machines. A lot of it does come from lower down school but they are now on a pedestal and are fully expected to do well, and they know it. They go from lesson to lesson being told what they should achieve both in the exams and in the future and they are just so used to doing exams. These have already done their GCSEs in some subjects and so they have done so many exams that they know how to pass them. You'll see it in lessons if you come in, they just want to know 'how do I pass sir?'. All they are

interested in is getting the best mark possible by learning what they need to learn to do well in the assessment. Last year they just did everything that you told them in both practical and theory because they thought it would improve their grade and I know that's why they are doing volleyball now. They need to do it, to get better at it so that they can do well on moderation day
(Guided Conversation: Alex – PE teacher)

In addition to this, there was also evidence to suggest that even though the Performer lads appeared intent on doing well in their respective PE courses, they seemed focused on their ostensibly more 'academic' subjects. In this regard, Y11 Performers highlighted the fact that they viewed their examination PE course as a form of 'break' from the academic rigours of their other subjects rather than a subject that took up most of their time and effort:

Callum: Because like PE really, it's our only real break i'nt it, we haven't really got any other lessons where you can like relax a bit more.

ASc: So you said that this is...Sam you said, sorry Aaron, you said this (PE) is a bit of a break, what do you mean by that?

Aaron: Well...it sounds horrible but we don't really take PE as serious as we do our maths and science grade. You can go to PE and like play volleyball rather than having to just sit there reading a text book, writing what's in't text book.

Callum: I wunt [wouldn't] say it was a pressure (AS level PE) because we've already got our GCSE and that's expected. This is really just a bonus, so, like, we put effort in but like in practical. It's like because we're in lessons together all day, it's just two lessons we're apart int it? So like we spend loads of time with loads of people all the time we tend to get a bit stressed 'art but when you do practical it's like, it gives you a chance to get rid of it.

(Focus Group: Y11 Performers)

This relative apathy towards the overall importance and significance of examination PE was also something that Will in the Y10 Performer Group also briefly highlighted:

Will: I don't want to put (GCSE) PE darn [down] but it's not as serious as other subjects.

(Focus Group: Y10 Performers)

Ultimately, what did appear to be most pertinent when examining the Performer lads' true attitudes towards their current KS4 PE experiences, was that this group seemed no different from the Problematic and Participants in that they would have preferred to play during practical PE lessons. When asked what they preferred to play in PE above all else, their response was almost unanimous – Football:

ASc: So if they (PE teachers) said to you what do you want to do, what would your general response be to that question?

Callum: Football.

Shaun: Football.

James: Football.

Ethan: Anything but football.

ASc: Anything but football?

Ethan: I don't like football.

...

Callum: We all like football and Ethan 'ed [would] be dancing.

(Focus Group: Y11 Performers)

Similarly, the Y10 Performer lads also suggested that football was by far their preferred choice:

ASc: And are there particular sports that you like doing over others?

Lads: Football.

...

ASc: So you'd say football. I mean I've done four or five of these now and everybody tends to say football.

Harry: It's the best sport really i'nt it.

Ollie: Yeah, we've been playing it since we were babies really so.

(Focus Group: Y10 Performer Group)

In addition to this strong preference for football, the PE staff were also aware of the Performer lads' preference for football despite having aired some frustrations towards having their range activities constrained by the Problematic lads in the past. Indeed, towards the end of the data collection phase comments by staff highlighted the fact that they were well aware that despite the Performer lads' positive attitude and behaviour around school and in PE more specifically, this specific group of lads (Y10 in this case) would also just prefer to be playing football in PE:

Oh yes, it's interesting you should say that. They are a great group and they will do most things. In fact they have done more than any other group I've taught since being here. But if I let them, I'm pretty sure that they would play football almost every week. I know the girls in here stop that happening because the lads (Performers) wouldn't want to play with them, and they're grown up enough to know that wouldn't be on [fair on the girls]. But they are football mad. I suppose that they're not much different from others in that respect. The only thing that really gets them going is playing football and I know that's all they do outside of school too.

(Guided Conversation: Alex – PE teacher)

The reasons for the lads' preference for football among all three groups of lads related closely to the lads' social backgrounds and more specifically their leisure profiles. Therefore, it is to a more detailed examination of this that the chapter will now turn.

Uses of leisure for all lads groups

As highlighted in the previous section, it was evident that the lads groups viewed and experienced PE differently but also held similar preferences towards particular activities, namely football. Therefore, the following section will examine how all three groups of lads 'chose' to use their leisure in an attempt to clarify and contextualise the lads' various attitudes and actions towards PE.

For the purpose of the findings, leisure will be defined as time left over after work and obligatory activities (such as personal hygiene, schoolwork, and family responsibilities) in which the lads were relatively free to choose what they did, as well as how they did it, and whom they did it with (Roberts, 2006). Evidence will rely predominantly on focus group responses alongside some brief covert observations of the lads indulging in recreational leisure activities in and around Ayrefield.

General leisure time

There were very strong similarities between all three groups of lads regarding what they did, whom they did it with, and where they did it. Focus group responses also suggested that the vast majority of lads across all three groups spent a significant proportion of their spare time physically active by engaging in sports (broadly defined to include recreational versions of competitive and institutionalized activities) and physical recreation. It was apparent from conducting focus groups, however, that very few of the lads across all three groups were involved in organised sports, preferring instead to indulge in recreational forms with their friends. It was perhaps unsurprising to find that virtually all of the lads who stated that they were currently involved in organized, competitive sport came solely from

the Performer group and, with the exception of Matt (athletics) and Josh (ice hockey), participation took the form of playing for local football teams:

Sam: Well, mainly football, like, well all weekend. I, like, go training on a Friday and then Saturday is mi' own time and then on Sunday when we play at home it's not that far away, but then when we play away it's like the other side of Sheffield and, like, it takes it most of mi day, but I dunt [don't] mind it because its summat [something] that I enjoy, like I'm not going somewhere to do somethin' that I dunt [don't] enjoy and I actually enjoy football.
(Focus Group: Y11 Performers: 1)

A number of comments suggested that a number of lads, spread across all three groups, had previously been involved in organised sport. Consequently, the phrase "I used to" was common across all three groups:

Wayne: I used to play for Braithwell but I stopped, me.
...
Mackenzie: I used to play for Drew Lane Bulldogs.
Kaden: I used to (also).
(Focus Group: Y10 Problematic: 1)

In addition to this, "I used to" (Daniel: Y10 Participant 2) was also a common response to questions regarding their involvement in school-based extra-curricular sport and football in particular.

The overarching theme that emerged from almost all focus groups conducted across all three groups, therefore, was that the vast majority of lads at ACS were not currently playing any form of organized, competitive sport of any kind, and questions relating to any clubs to which the lads were attached, or played for, were consistently met with silence. However, the picture appeared somewhat different for all three groups of lads when it came to 'lifestyle activities' which could be undertaken *how* (more-or-less competitive, for example), *where* (commercial gyms, voluntary or local authority sports centre, *with whom* (singly or with friends) and *when* (in bouts of spare time) they wanted. It was clear from focus group responses that the lads regularly (in some cases every day) participated in class-related lifestyle activities with groups of friends, such as fishing, shooting, riding off-

road motor bikes, snooker, weight training, and more extreme forms of 'hide and seek' (such as 'Man Hunt'). Again, this was evident amongst all three groups, with Y10 Performers indicating their regularly involvement in class-related activities:

Finley: I like fishing in the summer.

Jacob: I like fishing as well but it's just whether you've got the patience or not.

Ollie: I used to go fishing a lot like in year 7.

Will: I used to go fish a lot last year.

(Focus Group: Y10 Performers: 1)

As well as members of the Y10 Problematic group who also regularly took part in coarse fishing:

Karl: Skate park.

Shane: Go fishing.

...

Levi: Yeah, I love fishing me.

ASc: ... Is the brick pond still a decent site (for fishing)?

Levi: Yeah.

Tyler: Mi' granddad goes theyr [there] all t'time.

(Focus Group: Y10 Problematic: 2)

And the second Y10 Problematic group who spoke of a slightly wider range of class-related interests and activities, including some anti-social behaviour and vandalism

Mackenzie: Bikes.

Wayne: Motorbikes.

ASc: Fishing?

Kaden: Yeah, fishing.

Wayne: Yeah, skate park an' all but last time we got a skate park in Ayrefield we all went up 'ont motorbikes and just ripped wood off it ... I regret doing it nar [now] though.

...

Wayne: I hate fishing me it's boring as owt [anything].

Kaden: Yeah sometimes, it's alreyt [alright] if your catching.

Mckenzie: It's alreyt [alright] if you're night fishing and your with some of your mates or summat [something] and you get a couple of cans [alcohol].

Kaden: Ah that's it, get a couple of tinnies [cans of alcohol].

Lee: Every Saturday I go and play snooker.

...

Zak: I was playing last night.

Wayne: Ah love snooker me.

Mackenzie: To t'snooker club in Quarryvale.

(Focus Group: Y10 Problematic: 1)

The mixed Year 9 focus group also suggested that recreational forms of games organised by the lads themselves made up most of their spare time:

ASc: ... What do you play?,
Kieran: Hiddy [hide and seek]
Dean: Hide and seek (laughs).
ASc: Major hide and seek?
Craig: Oh yeah, we'll play Manhunt⁵ like. We'll bray 'em up [physical hit them] to get t'word out of 'em.
Dean: When it's reyt [really] dark nights we play Manhunt.
ASc: ... I've played it when I was younger.
Jack: Flowerpark? It's just a fence all around it so you just say 'reyt [right] you're not allowed outside of this fence.
Regan: Once we played all Ayrefield.
ASc: All Ayrefield, how long did that last?
Craig: We played all round the bottom end, all round t'cage and all up t'main road and that.
Dean: We were ringing each other to see if we could hear t'ringtone.
(Focus Group: Y9 Mixed)

Finally the Y10 Participants spoke of taking part recreationally in several class-related activities and although activities such as golf were mentioned, this simply pertained to irregular visits to a local driving range where clubs can be borrowed:

Mark: Motorbike.
ASc: Does anybody fish? Does anybody play tennis, cricket, golf, rugby ...?
John: Ar [I] play golf.
Ben: Fishing.
Paul: Ar [I] play golf but I'm crap at it.
ASc: What do you mean by golf? Do you go to the driving range?
John: Yeah sometimes with my little brother.
Mark: Ar gu [I go] to t'driving range to whack some balls.
(Focus Group: Y10 Participant: 1)

Whilst the activities that lads from all three groups took part in (to varying degrees) could be described as traditionally working-class pursuits, it was also clear that the lads were also almost entirely unsupervised during this time. With little obvious adult involvement, supervision, or surveillance, recreational activities seemed to be very popular among all

⁵ A team are each given the same 'key word' by their captain before they all go off to hide in a given area. The opposing team must attempt to find members of the hiding team and then ascertain their key word. In many cases this is done via intimidation and physical aggression.

lads as this time spent with friends provided them with the flexibility to play what they wanted at a time of their convenience:

ASc: So what will you generally do when you get in from school?

Riley: Gu art wit [go out with] mates.

Danny: Gym.

Dane: Just a game of footy and that.

...

Riley: Just have a laff [laugh] and chill art [out].

Danny: Some of us mates have got like sheds wi' pool tables in and we just gu [go] and sit in theyr [there].

Riley: Just chill and that.

Danny: Just play snooker and pool, have a laugh and that.

(Focus Group: Y11 Problematic: 1)

Whilst these opportunities for independence appeared to occur more easily for the Problematic lads, it was equally clear that for the Performer and Participant lads too, the potential constraints of school work or greater parental control did not necessarily constrain their leisure time or choices. Therefore, for the vast majority it did seem that a traditional working-class approach to family life and parenting enabled almost all lads to spend time with friends and away from immediate adult contact.

Parental influence

On the whole, therefore, the vast majority of lads across all three groups consistently gave responses during focus groups and guided conversations that suggested that their social lives matched those of 'typical' working-class lads. This is due to the fact that lads across all three groups were likely to 'play' unsupervised from an early age, comparatively free from adult control, and with much of their socialisation taking place in the company of their age peers. As an extension to this, there was very little evidence in the focus groups that parents had made a conscious and/or proactive effort to encourage their sons to participate in sports, particularly those that fell outside 'typical' working-class activities and pursuits (e.g. football and fishing). Although there were a handful of responses that highlighted

sporadic involvement in less traditional, working-class pursuits from different groups, such as golf and skiing:

Shaun: Snowboard ... I went to Bulgaria ... I used to do it more regular but I think nar [now] we just do the odd weekends and like weeks away abroad.

ASc: So is that something that the school introduced you to or your mum and dad?

Shaun: No, I went wi' mi dad.

(Focus Group: Y11 Performers: 1)

there did not seem to be any evidence that these 'unusual' interests and activities were pursued on any regular or committed basis. Therefore, these lads' involvement in such activities proved to be exceptions to the norm rather than indications of regular participation in more 'middle-class' leisure pursuits:

Stephen: I go wi' mi' dad to play golf and that.

ASc: Where do you golf Jack?

Stephen: Hickleton ... like the first time I went wi' mi' dad though he made me carry his golf clubs like. I was like his slave. Like 32 holes or summat I wo' knackered.

(Focus Group: Y9 Mixed)

Indeed, notwithstanding the involvement in skiing and 'golf' with parents highlighted here, the majority of other lads' involved in the focus groups indicated that their parents' involvement in sport and physical recreation was very low. When any reference was made to parental 'involvement' in any sense, this was limited to their fathers' and/or brothers' former involvement or interest in football, 'golf', fishing and shooting:

ASc: So what about your parents? Have your parents or your guardians or whoever you've living with at the moment influenced your involvement in sport in any way.? Will you're nodding.

Will: Yeah. Mi dad plays football. I mean he used to play for a team but he's stopped now and he does a lot of weights and stuff because we've got like multi-gyms in the house and stuff.

...

Jacob: Yeah, football again really.

Ollie: Yeah football really. I mean my dad's obsessed with football, so ...

Jacob: My dad was, apparently, a really good footballer when he was younger. He had trials for Barnsley and that when he about 17 and then he got offered to go to a team in like league one but because his mum and dad weren't very supportive.

(Focus Group: Y10 Performers: 1)

This form of male dominated influence was also mentioned with both the Y10 Problematic lads groups:

ASc: Do they influence you in any way about what you do outside of school?

Levi: I've gone golf a couple of times. Do you know when you've got nothing to do, just go up t'golf links and have a game of golf.

ASc: Who's that with, your dad?

Levi: Yeah, because me dad used to do it when he was younger like.

(Focus Group: Y10 Problematic: 2)

With members of both groups suggesting male members of their families had once been active and had subsequently influenced the lads interest (to varying degrees):

Mackenzie: My dad used to play football but he dunt [doesn't] anymore 'cause of his leg.

Wayne: My dad used to (play football) but now if he run (sic) from here to the end of that corridor he'd be on his back.

Jay: Me and mi dad go shooting.

ASc: Where do you go shooting Jay?

Jay: Just local field.

(Focus Group: Y10 Problematic: 1).

It is important to stress, however, that this apparent influence and joint participation in recreational activities with male family members related to only several focus group responses from the lads. For the majority of the other lads involved in focus groups there was no evidence from responses that their parents currently participated in any regular form of physical activity or had done in the past. In many cases lads across all three groups suggested that their parents had no general interest in sport either:

ASc: Do your parents, or guardians, or whoever you live with, are they interested in any sports, do they take you to any activities?

Lucas: No, mi' mum tells me to get out of t'house. You know go out and get off my Playstation. She'll be like 'get art [out] o'house'.

(Focus Group: Y9 Mixed)

In response to questions about family involvement and encouragement, the typical response from lads in many of the focus groups was simply silence. Beyond the few who commented upon parental involvement and influence and the many who simply had

nothing to say, the next most common response came in the form of somewhat negative observations:

Mark: My mum and dad are lazy.

Paul: My mum and dad are always at work.

...

Chris: (they just) Sit darn [down]

(Focus Group: Y10 Participants 1)

Overall, therefore, there was very little sign of parents actively encouraging their sons to be active, and similarly little evidence from the focus group responses that any of the lads' parents were in any way active themselves. Perhaps most significant in terms of the lads' participation in active leisure, however, was the inability and perhaps disinclination, of their parents to facilitate their sons' involvement:

ASc: Is there anything that stops you getting involved?

Levi: It's just travelling int it [isn't it]. It's getting theyr [there].

Shane: Yeah, it's getting theyr [there]

Levi: Especially when you 'ant got nobody to tekya [take you].

ASc: Would your mum and dad not take you?

Shane: It just depends what day it us, 'cause they're all at work.

Corey: Yeah, they're at work.

(Focus Group: Y10 Problematic 2)

A similar issue was also highlighted by the other Problematic lads focus group:

Wayne: I played for a football team but I quit because I cun't [could not] get to the all games and that because mi dad's always golfing and drinking so...

...

Wayne: I was supposed to go to Leeds academy but that was ages ago now and I cunt get to all t'matches. That was when I played for Lowfield that.

ASc: Cun't [couldn't] get t'matches then 'cos [because]....? '

Wayne: I cun't [couldn't] get to t'matches 'cause I dint [didn't] even talk to me dad then.

ASc: So maybe where you would have liked to have gone you couldn't get there?

Wayne: I would have liked to go to Leeds (United) academy yeah.

(Focus Group: Y10 Problematic 1)

Influence of friends

With little influence from parents, focus group responses showed that the lads' predispositions towards involvement in a narrow range of class-related activities

(dominated by football) tended to be reinforced and recreated by friendship/peer groups alongside their broader working-class culture. Playing recreational forms of football with school friends, in and around Ayrefield, was by far the most common leisure-time physical activity for lads to participate in across all three groups:

ASc: ... What would you say that you did most when you weren't at school?

Kieran: Football.

Luke: Football.

Lucas: Football.

Scott: Football.

(Focus Group: Y9 Mixed)

Also responses such as these from the Y10 Problematic lads were common from all three groups:

ASc: What do you do when you're not at school? When you leave school tonight what are you likely to do?

Shane: Probably play football on't Carfield [local field].

Corey: Go art [out] and play footie.

(Focus Group: Y10 Problematic: 2)

Despite the fact that very few of the lads played organised, competitive football for teams in local leagues, they all still tended towards informal competitive football in their leisure time:

ASc: You said about football, is that just a knock-about, kick about ...?

John: Matches.

Mark: ... We have matches against each other.

ASc: And where do you do that?

Chris: Darn at t'cages⁶ on Front Street darn near t'Asda.

Mark: And I go t'Carfield.

(Focus Group: Y10 Participant: 1)

Participant group 2 stated that playing recreational football after school was common:

ASc: Does anybody take part in anything else? What about when you're not at school? Do any of you take part in any sports outside of school?

Oliver: I play football but not for a team. Just mess around and put t'nets up.

Anthony: Yeah, it's pretty much every day. We go art [out] and play football.

⁶ 'The Cages' are local authority funded outdoor sports facilities situated in two local parks. They are relatively large metal structures which provide waist high perimeter fences around the sides and permanent football goals and basketball nets at either end

Daniel: We just go out and have a kick abart [about].

ASc: Is that something a lot of you do?

Ryan: Yeah, especially when it's warm. Go home, get changed and straight art [out] for a kick abart [about].

Oliver: I've been art [out] every day for t'last week me. (playing football).

(Focus Group: Y10 Participants: 2)

It was evident then, that the recreational playing of football made up a significant proportion of the lads' leisure time. Focus group responses across all three groups, as well as conversations overheard during general observations, consistently involved reference to 'The Cage' ("t'cage") and it was clear that from a very early stage these cages were sites for a vast majority of their physical activity, as well as a significant degree of socialising with friends and peers. The regularity of attendance at The Cage was high, and in more extreme cases took place late in to the night, as well as during periods of poor weather:

Regan: Me, Jack and Billy go The Cage and play football, like ... everyday.

Dean: Every day.

ASc: Do a lot of people go to The Cage and play football?

Lads together: Yeah.

Lucas: Yeah, yeah.

Craig: We play five a side everyday.

...

ASc: How many people go down to The Cage? ... A lot of people have mentioned The Cage.

Dean: If you went when it was sunny there'd be loads of people darn theyr [there] ...like about....30.

Craig: We go when it's snowing, Ah mean, we even played int' snow when it were deep.

...

ASc: ...On average how many nights would you go to The Cage?

Regan: Five nights.

Craig: Like, seven nights.

...

Craig: Yeah. Like Monday and I'll go darn [down] late Tuesday 'cause I'm at mi' dads and Thursday and Wednesday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday we're 'art. We'll be like Sunday ... I'll have mi' Sunday dinner and I'll meet ya' at t'cage.

(Focus Group: Y9 Mixed)

Problematic (Y10) lads also spoke of visiting The Cage regularly:

ASc: A lot of people have mentioned this cage. Do any of you lot go down and play at The Cage?

Wayne: I go to The Cage nearly every day.

Kaden: Yeah, that's what I do.

(Focus Group: Y10 Problematic: 1)

A significant proportion of the games of football and meetings at The Cage occurred spontaneously, relying for the most part on sufficient numbers of lads being present at any one time in order to be able to play some sort of 'game'. In some cases, the lads appeared to confirm their friends' intentions to be at The Cage after school or over the weekend:

Will: ... And we're all reyt [really] close and school so we can just talk to 'em that way too, so ...

(Focus Group: Y10 Performers)

Members of the Y11 Performers group highlighted the same approach:

Sam: You'd just mention it at school.

Callum: Yeah, you just see someone at school and say 'oh, do you fancy t'cage later?' and then you'd phone when you get home from school and then you'd go down and meet 'em.

(Focus Group: Y11 Performers)

Also, the Y10 Problematic lads also suggested that they would agree to meet up later at The Cage whilst at school:

ASc: So you'd find somebody to go darn with ya [you] or phone your mates up. Would you do that at school?

Tyler: Yeah. Like at dinner we'll just see who's going art.

(Focus Group: Y10 Problematic: 2)

However, it was also not uncommon to hear that the lads from all three groups would simply go down to The Cage, knowing that at least someone would be there with whom they could play:

Tom: And I think a lot of people even if you 'ant got their number of owt [anything], you just know that they're gunna be theyr [going to be there]. You know like int' summer you just knew that there'd be people ont' [on the] astro turf and you'd just go darn.

Callum: Yeah, you'd just go darn and there'd be somebody there. Like even if you dunt [don't] get on wi' somebody a lot, if you ant got a lot in common wi' 'em, you can play football.

Tom: You don't have to do ya, you can just play football.

(Focus Group: Y11 Performers)

This tendency to just arrive at The Cage knowing that someone would be there was also something that the Y9 lads mentioned:

Dean: It's luck really i'nt it?

Craig: We'll go home, get changed and that and who ever's down theyr [there] we'll say 'do you want a game'?

(Focus Group: Y9 Mixed)

As well as the Y10 Problematic lads:

ASc: How do you meet? Do you just happen to go down there at the same time?

Wayne: We just go down there.

ASc: Do you ever play against people from other areas or is it generally just people who are down there?

Wayne: Whoever we see. If we get bored we just say 'do ya wanna play' and they say yeah.

(Focus Group: Y10 Problematic: 1)

Once the lads were at The Cage, 'games' appeared to be organised with little fuss and invariably involved competitive, skill-based versions of the game that had often been created by the lads themselves. Again, the tendency to play in this way was highlighted by the Y10 Participants:

Chris: We'll probably just play heads and Vs [volleys]⁷.

Mark: Or we do play one-man cuppies⁸.

(Focus Group: Y10 Participant: 1)

As well as the Performers (Y10):

Jacob: We just have a game or we play 'one-man cuppies' like.

Finley: There are loads of different types of games that you can play and you only need 8 or 9 people.

Jacob: A lot of thing for us when other people just play taking each other on and stuff, we'll play passing games and it actually helps us a lot (with our skill level)

(Focus Group: Y10 Performers)

And also the Problematic lads

Bailey: One on, one off ⁹

(Focus Group: Y10 Problematic: 2)

⁷ 'Heads and Volleys' is a game involving just one goal and pairs playing as teams against each other. As the name suggests, 'valid' goals in order to progress to the next round can only come from a header or volley.

⁸ 'One-man Cuppies' is also a one goal game where individuals play against each other. A goal means that they progress to the next round of 'the cup' whilst the last remaining player in each round is eliminated.

⁹ 'One on – One off' is similar to 'One man Cuppies' but involves the last remaining player in each round having to go in goal, while the current goal keeper is allowed to rejoin the game in the next round.

In some cases it seemed that the rules to games that were organised by the lads themselves were relatively complex. However, they were clearly understood and accepted by the lads themselves as the games 'evolved' or the lads were socialised into the nature of the games:

Kaden: I play 'One-man Art [out].

Wayne: We play 'Thing', this game called 'Thing' – whoever gets lowest darn [down] to hit t'crossbar goes in't net then it goes in age order to try and score and if you don't you're art [out].

ASc: So it's like 'One-man Cuppy?

Wayne: Yeah but you like tek [take] it in turns shooting, it's mint [excellent].

(Focus Group: Y10 Problematic: 1)

On the occasions where more competitive games had been organised, the lads from all three groups had utilised social media as a way of ensure attendance and providing some form of organisation between the various groups involved. In many cases, the way in which they went about 'organising' meeting up was premeditated and complex, and often involved various forms of social media and the use of mobile phone communication:

ASc: How do you go about sorting that (going to The Cage to play football)?

Finley: Facebook really, Facebook...we are always texting each other so we'll just text and say do you want to come darn t' t'cage.

(Focus Group: Y10 Performers: 1)

The same was also true of other groups in other years, including the Problematic lads:

ASc: Right, so say you wanted a game of football tonight, would you just go darn [down] and think I hope that somebody's there or would you sort it out?

Shane: We'd sort it art [out].

Karl: You just phone your mates up or summat [something].

Levi: You'd find somebody to go darn wi' ya [down with you].

(Focus Group: Y10 Problematic: 2)

And also lads from the Participant group (Y10)

John: We'll just ring or summat [something], or text or we'll arrange it on Facebook

Chris: Or people will just call for you.

(Focus Group: Y10 Participant: 1)

This more organised and premeditated approach to organising participation via social media and mobile phone was particularly evident when the lads intended to play competitive matches against groups of lads who no longer attended ACS or even groups of lads who lived outside of the local area:

ASc: Do you ever have matches?

Mackenzie: Yeah.

Kaden: If there's enough people.

...

Mackenzie: (against) Older people. It's better wi' older people

ASc: Older ones who have left, who still come here?

Mackenzie: Left.

Kaden: Yeah it's more challenging.

(Focus Group: Y10 Problematic: 1)

The Participants also suggested that it was not uncommon for the lads from Ayrefield to play competitive games against other lads from time to time:

ASc: Yeah, would you ever play lads from another area or owt [anything] like that?

John: It depends where you go because sometimes people come here and they ask you to play 'em.

David: Yeah, it just depends where theyr from and how far they want to come.

...

John: They'll just ask you if they want to play against 'em and it's alreyt [alright].

(Focus Group: Y10 Participant: 1)

In all examples, it was interesting to note that the lads themselves did the officiating, during which rules were created and implemented among themselves with seemingly little fuss:

ASc: So what about ref'ing [refereeing] and stuff? How do you ref?

Regan: We dunt [we don't].

Kieran: There's like referre in't net [goalkeeper] int the' [isn't there].

...

Lucas: If you trip 'em ov'r [them over] its like a free kick or summat [something].

(Focus Group: Y9 Mixed)

This self-policing tended to involve ridicule as a means of establishing the norms regarding match behaviour and this was something that both the Participants:

John: If someone runs in to you and falls t' t'floor you're like "ger' up ya' [get up you] puff".

ASc: Yeah but somebody has to make a decision and say, "that was a hand ball"?

Mark: We do do that.

Chris: Yeah but sometimes when you do that the other team dunt [doesn't] agree and you just end up arguing.
(Focus Group: Y10 Participant: 1)

And the Performer lads also alluded to this:

ASc: What about how you play because I've seen a lot of you playing at all years from doing my observations and it's very, very competitive and there's nothing wrong with that but when you're playing in The Cages and stuff and it gets competitive how do you officiate that?

Ollie: Screaming at each other basically.

Finley: Well you're not exactly allowed to hit each other.

Jacob: If you're playing 'One man Cuppy' and there's about ten people it'll set off not that competitive, you know you just score and you go through and then it gets closer to the final and it gets more competitive because people want to win.

ASc: Yeah, but if it gets competitive you've normally got the referee there to say 'that's a hand ball' but...

Ollie: We normally have the keeper who is referee.

Jacob: That doesn't always end well though.

Ollie: We always get theyr [there] in the end though.

ASc: But it must end relatively well because you have a game and...

Jacob: Yeah we do. Nothing ever really goes wrong.

Will: Not really. There's never any feyts or owt [fighting or anything].

ASc: 'Cause it's really interesting to me because another group have said about the goalkeeper being a referee so if there was like a bad tackle, who's responsibility is it to make the decision?

Ollie: Basically he just shouts, the goalkeeper just shouts.

ASc: And what would you do then?

Jacob: We would just stop the game.

Finley: And on The Cages 'cause it's concrete you never really do any bad tackles anyway.

Jacob: But on the grass.

Will: Yeah now we've started going on Carfield park to play football. People just stop don't they. They just pick the ball up and stop the game.

ASc: So I think you could probably teach the premiership something because there's no major issues...

(Boys all laugh.)

(Focus Group: Y10 Performer: 1)

As well as the Y10 Problematic group:

ASc: And so in terms of actually reffing [refereeing] it, what will happen if there's like a bad tackle?

Wayne: Then we'll just have a free kick same as normal.

ASc: So do you referee yourselves? Does that work quite well?

Wayne and Mackenzie: Yeah.

(Focus Group: Y10 Problematic: 1)

It was clear, therefore, that the opportunity for the lads (from all three groups) to spend time away from school with their friends created an opportunity for them to 'have a laugh' in the company of people they chose. The fact that such a significant proportion of this time was spent playing football was something that the lads were aware of and happy to try to explain. For lads across all three groups, football was clearly something that had always been a big part of their lives and something that they acknowledged as being significant within the local community:

ASc: What I'm more interested in finding out...Why do you think it (football) is so heavily dependent for you lot, and particularly round here...?

Shaun: You don't need much, you've got a football and that's it.

Callum: It's the easiest thing to do, it's cheap, it's one of the cheapest things to do and everybody enjoys it.

Shaun: I think because everybody in your family does it from round here and you grow up wi' it.

Aaron: I think primary. A lot of the stuff that primary did for sport was football?

Callum: I think it's a bit of both 'cause I think rarn'd [around] here, because everybody likes football, there'll be a lot of stuff to do with football, like any field nar [now] there'll be a cage put on it or two posts put on it, and then because of that more people play football and because of that they put more football pitches... (Focus Group: Y11 Performers: 1)

The Y10 Performers also spoke of a similar, football-dominated upbringing

Harry: It's the best sport really i'n't it?

Ollie: Yeah, we've been playing it since we were babies really so.

...

Ollie: And I think because it's (Ayrefield) a really deprived area there's not a lot else to do.

Jacob: And there is The Cage too.

Finley: And it's something that we've grown up learning and thinking about.

...

Ollie: Playing football yeah.

Jacob: I suppose it's what every lad does isn't it?

Ollie: I think football is the easiest; you just need a ball.

(Focus Group: Y10 Performers: 1)

In, addition similar comments came from the Y11 Problematic lads:

Rohan: We play a lot of football outside of school.

Danny: We watch play football, play football.

Dane: We always do it.

Troy: We grew up on it really.

(Focus Group: Y11 Problematic)

As well as Y10 Problematic group 1:

Wayne: I dunt [don't] know. Because most people like it (football).

Kaden: That's all there is to do (play football).

Lee: It's the first sport that we play.

Mckenzie: It's a laugh when you're wi' your mates.

Kaden: There's loads of different games in it an' all, so if you get bored...

Wayne: You can just change it.

(Focus Group: Y10 Problematic: 1)

The future

Problematic lads in school

Initially, there was some evidence to suggest that acquiring qualifications as a means of securing a college place and ultimately gainful employment and/or training, had resulted in some of the Problematic lads curtailing some of the excesses of their behaviour and adhering to some school rules in order simply to remain in school:

Wayne: Ar dunt [I don't] like school and ar dunt [I don't] really like them (teachers), but I know I'm close to being kicked art. Mi mum's been in twice since Christmas and they even gid [given] me t'forms to transfer schools but that's not happening. I need to keep mi 'ead darn [my head down] and just get t'end. Ar [I] can't wait for college next year me.

(Focus Group: Y10 Problematic: 1)

However, when the Problematic lads were probed further it was clear that 'towing the line' in order to stay in school and achieve the required number of qualifications was a continuous and not always successful 'battle' for many of them:

Jay: Teachers give us homework but they know it gets thrown in't bin.

Zak: Obviously.

Wayne: I ant [haven't] done one piece of homework since year 7. Not one ... Not one bit. As soon as ar [I] get home I just get changed, have mi tea and see ya later.

Kaden: Yeah, but we're always art [out] playing football 'n stuff.

Jay: It's personal time.

Kaden: We just gu art [go out].

Wayne: We do loads of work at school ne'r [never] mind after school an' all.

(Focus Group: Y10 Problematic: 1)

On the whole, therefore, despite early responses that appeared to highlight a strong desire to stay in school and “do well” (in relative terms), they actually wanted to do the bare minimum to gain the required qualifications needed for a place at college. It was clear that many of the Problematic lads viewed school primarily as a vehicle for socialising with friends – something that they valued highly:

Dane: I think it's (school) alreyt, just to have a laff wi't mates.
Riley: I just look forward to seeing mi'mates.
Danny: That's all ar like.
Troy: That's the only think ar'll miss, coming in to see ya' mates.
(Focus Group: Y11 Problematic)

this was also supported by the second Y10 Problematic group:

Bailey: Coming and seeing all your mates.
Shane Coming and seeing your mates. Even if it's raining you've still got to come here 'ant ya [haven't you].
Bailey: I prefer not to come to school but it's good to because you see all your mates.
(Focus Group: Y10 Problematic: 2)

In addition, the Problematic lads also spoke of the constraining influence that the presence of friends and friendship groups had on individuals' ability to concentrate and work in lessons:

Kayden: I get easily distracted me.
MacKenzie: I do. Very easy.
Kayden: If somebody starts talking to you I start having a full conversation really.
Wayne: If I have my mates sitting next to me and they start talking and I want to do my work, I can't I've just got to start talking to 'em.
(Focus Group: Y10 Problematic: 1)

As well as the Problematic lads' strong sense of detachment from school and education, they also spoke of the irrelevance of much of what they were taught at school, especially in relation to their own particular life-worlds:

Karl: The lessons because like in English we did abart [about] Mcbeth (sic) abart [about] a year ago and now we're doing it again nar [now]. It's like doing same thing over and over again. It's mad.
Shane: The thing abart [about] Mcbeth (sic) like is like it's not as if you're going to need it when you're older.

Bailey: That's what I mean. They learn (sic) you stuff that you're not ever going to need.

Shane: It's like x times 2, why will we need that when we're older?

(Focus Group: Y10 Problematic: 1)

There was also evidence that the Problematic lads saw the majority of their teachers as being too strict and in many ways emerged as being quiet 'alien' to the lads:

Shane: Because most of 'em shout, they talk too and much and they're just stupid.

Karl: They just talk too much.

Levi: Like Mr Carter.

Shane: He just sends you out for nowt [nothing] him.

Tyler: You're just sat down doing nowt [nothing] and then you're out.

Bailey: It's that shouting that does me when they shout at ya ... [I] just shart [shout] back or a just give 'em some grief and gu [go].

Levi: Yeah the teachers proper wind me up.

...

Tyler: They're too strict.

Levi: It's like how some of 'em talk to ya.

Tyler: It's like a boring voice in't it.

Levi: Yeah, if *you* talk to them like that then...

Shane: If you talk to them like that then they just talk to you like something on the bottom of your shoe.

Karl: Like they shunt be strict and that.

Shane: Yeah. They treat us like five year olds.

Karl: Even if it's cold when you line up, you can't even wear your coat.

(Focus Group: Y10 Problematic: 2)

In contrast, however, the college tutors (with whom the Problematic lads worked several times a week) were particularly respected and valued. This seemed due to the fact that the Problematic lads were being treated like 'grown ups':

Riley: You just feel grown-up, 'cause they treat you like grown-ups.

...

Dane: Yeah: It's a lot better.

...

Riley: It just shows you what it's like in real life ... You just don't get treated like little kids, you can do more, if you want a drink you can go for a drink, do you know what I mean.

Rohan: More freedom to do what you want.

(Focus Group: Y11 Problematic)

In addition the Problematic lads also clearly valued the freedom of being at college:

Bailey: Yeah, you get tret [treated] like an adult at college.

Shane: They say we'll treat you like an adult if you treat us like an adult.

....

Levi: Yeah, you can just be yersen [yourself].
Shane: Yeah, they're like more serious 'cause you're wi' all your mates and that.
Levi: They're not bothered if you swear and that.
Bailey: You just feel more grown up and that.
Shane: 'Cause they dunt [don't] mind us swearing and that but not too much
(Focus Group: Y10 Problematic: 2)

It seemed clear then, that the Problematic lads were much more likely to view staff (college and school) in a positive way when they were perceived to act and speak in similar ways to themselves and/or were allowed to behave in a manner that more accurately matched the lads' behaviour outside of school.

Futures in the community

In terms of a broader view of their future lives, many of these Problematic lads very much saw their futures as being within their local community. Initially it seemed that the overriding influence on their desire to remain in the local area was to stay close to family members and the social bonds and support this appeared to provide. In response to a question about where they saw themselves in 10 years' time the responses tended to be consistent among the Problematic lads:

Bailey: I think still round here.
Levi: I think I'll still be round here [because] I've lived round here all my life. I know it's a bit of a shit hole like, but I just c'unt [couldn't] move.
Bailey: I c'unt [couldn't] either.
Karl: 'Cause all your family will still be here.
...
Levi: Yeah, it's all your family.
(Focus Group: Y10 Problematic: 2)

In some cases this was either bound up with the realization that the option of moving away from the area was unfeasible or one that they had not even considered (probably because of its unfeasibility):

Jay: I want to stay round here. It's where I've been brought up and I want to stay round mi mum and dad.
Mackenzie: And mi mates.
...

Wayne: If owt [anything] happens to yer [your] mum and dad then your theyr [there] for 'em arnt ya [them aren't you] ... ar [I] think I'll be with mi mum for the rest of mi life. I dunt [don't] want to, I want to move art but a' might just stay wi' mi mam and save up loads of money 'cause I wunt [will not] have to pay rent or nowt [nothing] and just go art [out] every single night.

...

Mackenzie: Yeah, because you're close to all your family.

(Focus Group: Y10 Problematic: 1)

Friends

The Problematic lads clearly placed great value on their friendships, both in the short and long term, by consistently suggesting that their current friends would be friends for life whilst simultaneously dismissing the possibility of moving from the area and making 'new' friends:

Shane: Like, if you've got mates and that it's alreyt [alright] ... 'cause people stick up for you and that.

Levi: ... 'Cause mates look after each other and that.

Shane: You need to keep at least some of your friends 'cause if you lose them all then you're going to end up wi' nowt [with nothing].

Bailey: You'll always have your friends though.

Tyler: Yeah, 'cause if you move away you're not going to see 'em.

Karl: Yeah, but you'd mek [make] new mates though wunt ya [wouldn't you].

Levi: Yeah, but you never know though do ya.

Bailey: I cunt [couldn't] do that though.

Tyler: I'd rather stick with mi old mates.

...

Shane: It's be different though because they wunt be [wouldn't be].....the same.

Karl: Some people might not trust 'em or summat.

Bailey: Like say if I got kicked out of this school, I wunt [wouldn't] go to no other school. I cunt [couldn't] do it. Meking [making] new mates and being new. I cunt [couldn't] do it.

(Focus Group: Y10 Problematic: 2)

It was evident, therefore, that the local neighbourhood continued to matter to these Problematic lads as they harboured no obvious intention to leave the area, despite their awareness of its negative aspects. It was also interesting to note that the PE teaching staff were also aware well aware of these lads' reluctance to leave the neighbourhood on finishing school/college:

Phil: It's just what they (Problematics) know.

Rich: I also think a lack of opportunity, familiarity that they've got, they don't want to. It's kind of following on from school and what's happened in PE, they don't want to go anywhere else or they're scared of trying something different.

Paul: They are definitely afraid of what's different.

Rich: They'll just stick with their little bubble. Their 'Ayrefield' bubble where they know people and they're comfortable and plod along.

Phil: Big fish in a little pond.

(Staff Focus Group)

Participant lads in school

The Participant lads on the other hand, harboured more positive attitudes to school and education, and subsequently displayed behaviours that were more conducive to 'success' at school. In relation to their 'place' in school, it was apparent that these lads had resigned themselves to their lack of status (amongst both their peers and teaching staff) and clearly occupied the 'middle ground' in and around school. Interestingly, however, the Participant lads appeared relatively happy to accept their place 'below' the Performer lads in their year group, whilst also keen to demonstrate their academic superiority over the Problematic lads:

Oliver: It's like well you're just going to be on t'dole and I'm going to have a good job and be happy so...being hard dunt [doesn't] pay your mortgage.

(Focus Group: Y10 Participant: 2)

Overall, it did seem that the Participant lads were relatively focused in their studies, keen to do well, and appeared both willing and able to achieve the grades expected of them in order to progress on to college:

ASc: ...Anthony, what's particularly important to you about qualifications?

Anthony: So you can get into college and stuff.

Oliver: It's dreams I'nt it. If you get your qualifications it means you can get a good job and good money and do what ever you want when you're older.

...

Daniel: I know I want to go to both college and university but I don't look any further than that because if I look too far and want something and I don't get it I won't be happy.

(Focus Group: Y10 Participant: 2)

In simple terms, therefore, the Participant lads were happy to come to school, remain relatively anonymous (amongst their Problematic peers in particular), and apply

themselves in all aspects of the studies to the extent that they were able to make solid progress:

These lads are generally my 'drifting' lesson. I don't mean that they are drifting throughout life without a purpose or that they are not really focused, I just mean that they generally come in, do what I ask them to do and then go to their next lesson. They're not going to pull any trees up academically, but they'll do all right and some of them will do really well. Given most of the groups I teach, they are a pleasure, so it's nice in that respect. If I'm honest I sometimes wish one of them would have a go at me just to spice things up! No, the best way that I can put it, is that if I see them in Tesco in a few years time I'll probably not be able to remember their name
(Guided Conversation: Mr Selkirk: Maths teacher)

Given this apparent willingness and ability to progress into further education (and perhaps beyond), as well as their disdain towards the Problematic lads in particular, it was perhaps not surprising that some Participants harboured a strong desire to leave Ayrefield in the future. However, it was also apparent that several of lads were willing to accept the 'issues' with the area as well as the positives in remaining, leading to a lack of clarity regarding where they saw their long term futures:

Daniel: I'm ashamed to live here.

Ryan: Yeah, I'm ashamed.

Phillip: It depends. There's like a good side to it and a bad side.

Ryan: Phil, I'm not trying to be funny but if you can tell me one good thing about living in Ayrefield.

Phillip: Community is good and all my friends live here.

Ryan: To be fair, with the new estate it is quite nice, but as soon as you leave that top road it's just 'Smackheadville' [full of drug users] again.

ASc: Ross says it's got community spirit. Do you like that about where you live

Phillip: Yeah, 'cause most of friends that I hang about with after school live on our estate.

ASc: Brad, you said that you'd got your friends around ya [you].

(Focus Group: Y10 Participants: 2)

Performer lads in school

For the Performer lads the issue of their status amongst peers and staff at school was a little more complex and nuanced. In the first instance, evidence highlighted the fact that the Performers had accepted the need to work hard in lessons, clearly valued academic qualifications, and appeared to engage in all aspects of the formal school curriculum:

Will: If you go to university though you're going to have a better chance of getting a better job though.

Jacob: Like if you want to do one thing, you can go to a university that does that one thing, like Loughborough that specialises in sport.

...

Will: We've got to stay in learning until we're 18 so we're got to either go to college or a sixth form anyway.

Ollie: I'd like to go to university to learn more about music technology

Jacob: But it'll help you get a better job as well.

(Focus Group: Y10 Performer)

Therefore, as a result of these attitudes and actions, as well as their isolation from the majority of their peers in lessons, the Performers emerged as a very select group amongst both their peers and staff. Initially it seemed that they had the potential to lack social status in this predominantly masculine working-class environment as a result of their strong academic achievement and focus. However, it was evident that the Performers had managed to generate a level of acceptance among their peers by being 'smart and sporty', something that PE staff highlighted more than once:

They do seem able to pull it off actually. Working hard and doing well is not really the done thing at ACS as you've probably seen already, but they are all quite sporty, including the girls, so that helps a lot. It's a fine line for them really but they have a way of pulling it off.

(Guided Conversation: Ben – PE teacher)

From general observations it seemed that the Performers were able to maintain a sense of 'coolness' and acceptance around school. However, it was also apparent that this status was unlikely to transfer to life outside of the school environment.

One of the most prominent reasons for their academic engagement and achievement at school seemed to be related to the isolated, like-minded Leaders groups now evident in KS4. As a consequence of this system, the 'Future Leaders' had evidently been exposed to heightened expectations regarding behaviour and academic achievement:

Aaron: Because all t'teachers say we're never different but then they'll come in next day and go 'oh, you're Future Leaders, you need to be setting examples, you need to be doing this'.

Shaun: It's like if we come in five minutes late it's like 'ooh, Future Leaders you shunt [shouldn't] be doing that, but then other kids can be like ...

Callum: Ten minutes late and it's just like oh, come in, sit darn [down] and get on wi' your work.

Shaun: Twenty minutes late. Some (lads) just don't even come in to school and it dunt [doesn't] matter.

(Focus Group: Y11 Performers)

A similar picture also emerged from the Y10 Performer lads:

Jacob: They know us as a good thing.

Finley: Yeah but some teachers tek [take] it to t'extreme by saying "why dunt [don't] you act as Future Leaders?"

...

Ollie: We get 'you should be doing this because you're Future Leaders, 'you should be doing that' because you're Future Leaders.

Will: It's not like we misbehave in school or owt [anything] but even if we're even slightly loud at dinner we get shouted at and that's another thing, do you know like you said at dinner we're not even allowed to talk to loud. We were all sat in a big group at dinner and Mr Rohan started to shout at us because we were supposedly being loud.

(Focus Group: Y10 Performers)

In addition, there was also evidence to suggest that a significant degree of competition existed between the lads in both KS4 Future Leader groups that seemed to generate a sense of 'drive' and determination:

ASc: So would you say there was a little bit of competition you all regarding ...?

Callum: There's more than a little bit of competition.

Shaun: Yeah, between them two (Alex and Brad) there's competition.

ASc: On your results and stuff or just generally school or ...?

Thomas: Just generally school, everything yeah.

Callum: Just anything we can beat each other at.

...

Aaron: You want to keep up wi' yer [with your] mates, you dunt [don't] want to like fall behind 'em like.

(Focus Group: Y11 Performers)

However, while the Performer lads pointed to the value in education, and worked hard to achieve academically, this was seen as purely pragmatic and instrumental – a vehicle for getting in to further and higher education whereupon they were more optimistic of studying subjects that they might enjoy. Even further and higher education was seen first and foremost as simply a step towards a better job:

ASc: Do you enjoy school lads?

Thomas: I enjoy it as much as I can. I mean your obviously not going to enjoy school are you, there's a lot of work and it gets boring and stuff but, I enjoy it as much as you can.

...

Thomas: Well nobody's going to enjoy their work are they?

Callum: Nobody enjoys going to school to do maths, English and science all day.

Shaun: ...But you do, because you get to see your mates.

(Focus Group: Y11 Performer)

By extension, despite the Performers' academic ability, these lads were just like their peers at ACS in that being with their friends at school was a significant dimension of school life. The importance of the social scene at school was something that the Performer group returned to time and time again:

Aaron: Like after school you can find yourself int' [in the] house just doing nowt [nothing], then you start missing school a bit, but there's nowt [nothing] really appealing abart [about] school ... coming to see your mates...to get to see your mates.

...

Callum: Especially in are form nar [now].

Thomas: Because we've been together for like ...

Callum: Two years, so we know everybody in form, everybody knows what it's going to be like.

(Focus Group: Y11 Performer)

Despite this, it was perhaps not surprising that given the Performers' aspirations and achievements at school, they evidently viewed their futures away from Ayrefield:

Ollie: It's a shit hole basically (Ayrefield).

Will: It's horrible.

Jacob: It really is a shit hole.

Ollie: I think it's probably one of the worst areas in the country.

Finley: It's part of the most 15% deprived areas in the UK.

(Focus Group: Y10 Performers)

The Performers also recognized the area as undesirable and held strong aspirations to leave the area in the future:

ASc: Where do you see you futures?

Shaun: Hopefully not [around here]! Well I'm not saying it's not a nice area but there's probably nicer places.

Callum: Part of me wants to stay round here because if I think that if people like us go who want to do better then the areas just gunna [going to] get worse, but part of me just thinks 'let's go, there's nowt [nothing] for us round here.

Shaun: I suppose it would be a bit boring just staying in the same area all your life.
Callum: We're just wanting to broaden your horizons. If I were gunna [going to] move, I wunt [wouldn't] just move to another village like this, I'd move to like a city or a different country or whatever.
(Focus Group: Y11 Performers)

Based upon their experiences of working at ACS, however, the comments of the PE teachers suggested that this might be more of an idealistic rather than realistic expectation:

Rich: They'll (Performers) get sucked in to that cycle don't they?
Alex: Then they don't realise that it's ...
Phil: Well you're not going to get the brain drain that you get in other areas, you know at certain ages they go off to their colleges and universities and perhaps they don't come back. I think you might get a few of those don't you? but not many because you do see the same faces knocking around.
...
Alex: A lot of our kids, I'm talking about kids who left two or three years ago, will go to Ayrefield Community College, stay on 'cause they get sold the idea of during an HND because if you stay at home you'll save all this money and then do a one year top up course at Leeds or whatever so they end up staying.
(Staff Focus Group)

In reality, therefore, it seemed that even for the Performer lads, the social bonds and ties that linked them to area would prove to be too strong to allow them to leave – at least for a prolonged period of time. Therefore, whilst these lads displayed very different attitudes to school and education to the majority of their peers, they were still very much part of a community and upbringing that was likely to tie them to their local community for the rest of their lives.

Parental influence (all groups)

In relation to parental influence and support regarding the lads' academic engagement and attainment, focus group responses did highlight some subtle differences between the lads groups. Perhaps not surprisingly, it did appear to be the case that the Participant and Performers lads were more inclined to highlight the fact that their parents often questioned them and ensured additional work (such as homework) had been completed:

Thomas: They want me to do well, mine want me to do well, like they'll ask me what grades I've got.
...

Sam: 'Cause like, if you do slack off a bit, like, they want you to do well as well as you do, they can, like, well they don't like, push you, like force you to do it.

Callum: You don't want to disappoint them really do ya?

Thomas: They'll let you stay at home, say if they know you've got an exam the next day, they'll let you stay at home rather than coming art [out] shopping.

...

Sam: I think they'd push us and get us to do it.

(Focus Group: Y11 Performers)

This attitude and approach from parents was also evident among the Y10 Performers:

Ollie: My mum is but it really does mi 'ed in [annoys me].

Finley: Mi mum and mi stepdad both want me to do well.

Will: My mum and dad are always encouraging me to revise as well.

(Focus Group: Y10 Performers)

And this was also something that the PE staff were aware of:

Yeah, a few of these lads mum's work in schools themselves as LSAs and stuff so when we speak to them they know what we're talking about. They are just much more on the ball with what their sons are doing. They are the parents that I am more comfortable ringing should I need to, because I know they will support what we are trying to do. Most of the parents here I wouldn't even bother ringing. Waste of time
(Guided Conversation: Alex – PE teacher)

However, there were also some responses in the Problematic focus groups that suggested that these parents also held a desire for their sons to 'do well' at school:

Tyler: They (parents) want you to do well.

Karl: 'Cause they care about you don't the'.

Shane: 'Cause they don't want to see you begging on the streets an' that, begging for money.

...

Bailey: If I'm bad at school they'll get to know before I get home ... [and] they'll ground me.

Karl: They always say to me, how've you been and all that.

Bailey: If I dunt [don't] behave at school I dunt [don't] get to go art

(Focus Group: Y10 Problematic: 2)

However, despite the fact that there appeared to be some form of support from parents regarding school and education, the comments from lads across all three groups suggested that parents were actually simply paying lip-service to their desire for their sons to do well at school. In reality, 'support' from parents almost entirely came from the offer of non-specific 'encouragement' and/or the offer of tangible, external rewards (such as

money) as a form of motivation. This detached form of support, therefore, seemed to be instead of a more educationally 'valuable' type of support, such as help with homework or 'encouraging' behaviours that match school requirements (e.g. reading recreationally at home):

ASc: Anthony, do you get a degree of support (from your parents)?

Anthony: Yeah, because if I get a good report or summat [something] like that they'll treat me. They might tek [take] me t'pictures [cinema] or summat [something] like that.

ASc: Is that common for any others?

Daniel: Not really. 'cause I got a C in my maths in Year 8 they bought me an iPad and that has covered everything that I now get.

Oliver: Your lucky. When I got my C I got a MacDonald's.

(Focus Group: Y10 Participant: 2)

This approach of offering material rewards as praise or an incentive was also something that emerged as being common amongst the Performer lads:

Jacob: They (parents) bribe you with money, that's what they do 'get an A and you can have 50 quid'.

Will: Yeah, 'cause in year 8 we did an actual exam towards our GCSE and when I got mi C mi mam and dad gave me 100 quid for it.

Ollie: My mum said 'well done, you could have done better'.

(Focus Group: Y10 Performers)

Even more common than the use of external rewards as incentives, however, appeared to be the consistent pleas from parents to 'not turn out like me' in relation to their own achievements and efforts at school. As a result, parents of lads across all three groups seemed to be presenting themselves as examples of what *not* to do, rather than emerging as successful role models to be looked up to and imitated. This emerged amongst the Y10 Problematic group:

Danny: Cause they've (parents) done bad, worse at school, like they 'ant gone that good so they know what it's like so they try to push you more.

Troy: They know what this area's like, they grew up in this area, so they know what this area's like. They just try and push you towards...

Danny: My mum and dad always say, "don't turn art like me and ya dad".

Riley: Yeah, that's what my mum and dad se' [say] ... don't skip lessons and that 'cause that's what they did at school. That's why they dint [din't] get their GCSEs. Like My mums says, she didn't even sit any of her GCSEs because she were at home like just helping art all time.

...

Jay: Mi dad tries to help me 'cause he never went to school and he left with not even one GCSE and he dunt [doesn't] want me to be like him.

Wayne: I know, my dad wa' cryin to me other day cause he wa' pissed up [drunk] and he knows that I've been bad at school were saying dunt [don't] do what ar [I] did when ar [I] were at school.

...

Wayne: Every time mi dad says that to me, all time mi dad says that to me.

(Focus Group: Y10 Problematic:1)

As well as the Y11 Performers:

Ethan: ...mi dad he wants me to be more academic and get a job in summat [something] smart like, so he meks [makes] me do it ... they might know people, or like themselves, who dint [didn't] do that well at school, so they wunt [wouldn't] want to see, like, us in't same position as them, or, like, who they know so they want us to do well, like, so we can have a better a better future and not just, like not have a job, and like, scraping through life and like well positioned.

(Focus Group: Y11 Performers)

And also the Y10 Participants:

Will: My mum and dad are always encouraging me to revise as well.

...

Ollie: Because they dint [didn't] do that well at school they want you to do well. That's what mi dad will say about it. He messed about a lot at school and he says that I've got the capability to do well so I should be doing well.

...

Oscar: Yeah, mi mum always says I dint do well but I want you to do well in it.

Jacob: My mum says dunt [don't] get in to girls because that's what she did.

(Focus Group: Y10 Performers)

Teaching staff (Phil) were evidently unimpressed by the parental pleas in this regard:

We always hear that. Parents say don't do what I do, don't turn out like me. What sort of example is that for the lads here when their parents are basically saying 'I'm not a role model, son. Don't do what I do'

(Guided Conversation: Phil - 5th February)

The aim of this chapter has been to present the main findings of the study in relation to ways that working-class lads experience and influence their PE experiences. In order to contextualise these findings the lads' PE experiences have been related to the ways in which these lads participate in leisure activities, engage in school/education, and view their future lives so that a more complete picture of their lives and influences can be considered.

The following chapter will now attempt to make sense of the findings and explain the key outcomes in relation to current literature and the work of Norbert Elias and Pierre Bourdieu.

Chapter 6: Discussion

The primary aim of this chapter is to consider the main findings of the study in relation to previous research and relevant sociological theory. In doing so, an attempt will be made to explain and understand the range of key issues to emerge from the study in greater detail. The first main part of the chapter addresses issues pertaining to the social background, school experiences, and leisure pursuits of the lads from Ayrefield before moving on to

their PE experiences. This is undertaken in order to use the lads' broader lives as a way of contextualizing how they then came to experience and negotiate PE at ACS. The second part of the chapter will use the work of both Norbert Elias and Pierre Bourdieu in order to understand and explain the findings from a sociological perspective, with a justification for this approach included beforehand. Before this, however, the first section will address the potentially value-laden terms that are used within the discussion, as well as within the thesis more generally.

It should be acknowledged that some of the terms/concepts utilised in the analysis and discussion in the thesis might, in some quarters, be considered contentious and even value-laden. Nevertheless, some of these terms pre-existed the study, emerged from the literature, and were therefore incorporated as a means of describing their target groups: for example, the 'rough' and 'respectable' working-class (Nayak, 2006). For example, the concepts 'rough' and 'respectable' working-class were used throughout Nayak's (2006: 825) study focusing on the 'layered and differently patterned cultural habits of what has historically been defined as 'rough' and 'respectable' working-class'. In this regard, use of the terms in the present study was intended to key into the existing literature. More specifically, while acknowledging that 'class remains an ever-present arbiter...structuring young lives' (Nayak, 2006: 825), the study highlights the often subtle, yet seemingly significant differences between the 'dirty, violent, impoverished' Chavvers (Chavs) of Newcastle and the 'Real Geordies' who saw themselves as 'clean, skilled, and upwardly mobile'. This very similar social class background that led to differing outcomes among some of its residents, and set against the impact of mass deindustrialisation, informed the present study, hence the use of similar descriptors. Subtle differences between lads' rough and respectable families appeared to cause lads from very similar social backgrounds to develop particular attitudes and behaviours in many areas of their lives.

Other terms/concepts (e.g. Problematics) were generated specifically for the study, and were intended to capture not only the teachers' and fellow pupils' views of the youngsters labelled thus (particularly in relation to the perceived impact of these youngsters on the teachers and pupils themselves) but also the author's perceptions of each group's position in the school. In this regard, they were coined as useful analytical terms. Consistent attempts were also made throughout the thesis to emphasise the fact that the terms were used as part of the attempt to interpret and make sense of the data, and not as a result of any pre-conceived assumptions relating to the lads, the school or the local area. Therefore, as stated several times in the thesis, the terms Problematics, Participants, and Performers were created solely for the purpose of the study as data began to emerge from lesson observations and guided conversations. It was also acknowledged that not all lads could be assigned to one of the three groups and that the terms themselves were again potentially value-laden and presumptuous. However, it was felt that the three terms were a suitable and adequate reflection of the ways that the lads at ACS emerged from the study, as well as the ways that they came to engage in school, interact with staff and peers, and experience PE. The Problematics were termed precisely because of their attitude and behaviour around school with teachers, friends and peers, and was not a preconceived term or group created prior to data collection. Participants demonstrated a strong desire to participate in/get through school and Performers were consistently found to be the group more likely to achieve, progress to FE and HE, and 'succeed' as a result of academic performance/ability.

Finally, the term 'sink school' was also something that had certain implications attached to its use. It is acknowledged in this regard, that this term had presumptuous and largely negative connotations, and is also seen by some as a dated phrase in contemporary education literature. However, once again, this was a term that emerged from the literature on the subject (Gorard et al., 2003). In addition, data emerging from the study, as well as

time spent in the local area, confirmed that ACS was indeed a school that continued to be viewed in the local area precisely in the terms associated with a 'sink school' in that is consistently underachieved in relation to academic results/progress and was annually undersubscribed causing them to be constrained towards accepting transient pupils.

ACS as a 'sink' school

There was evidence within the study to support the existence of ACS as a 'sink school' (Fitz et al., 2002; Fitz et al., 2006), which was based on recent Ofsted ratings, examination results, and the general reputation of the school within the local area. There was also a strong awareness among lads from all three groups that they attended a school that was 'demonized' in the local area for low academic achievement and ill-discipline (Reay, 2004). This evidence highlighted the fact that some more proactive and 'respectable' parents living in Ayrefield may have engaged in actions that have been shown to be more synonymous with the middle-classes (Ball, 2010; Bodovski, 2010; Gerwitz, 2001; Hatcher, 1998; Vincent, 2001). However, the findings suggested that the parents who had selected 'better' schools for their children outside of the local catchment area might have done so as part of a pragmatic attempt to enhance their children's academic successes. There was no evidence that this had taken place as part of a conscious attempt to ensure that the work that they had invested in their children would be built upon, in manner more common among middle-class parents (Ball, 2010; Bodovski, 2010; Evans, 2006, Hatcher, 1998; Reay, 2004). Further evidence that this process was at work came via the fact that there was a strong degree of polarisation between schools situated in very close proximity (Fitz et al., 2006) to ACS.

Ayrefield as a working-class community

It was also evident from the available data linked to Ayrefield that the local area had followed the national trend away from heavy industry as a source of employment towards a post-industrial service-based society. Subsequently, data showed that residents of Ayrefield had become increasingly dependent on part-time and insecure employment and occupations (e.g. call centres) (Felstead & Jewson, 1999; Green & Owen, 2006; Hollands, 1995; MacDonald, 2008; McDowell, 2001; McKnight, 2002; Nayak, 2006; O'Donnell & Sharp, 2000; Roberts, 2011; Robinson, 1988; Shildrick et al., 2009). This appeared as somewhat problematic given the fact that the lads across all three groups viewed these new 'options' of service-related work as antithetical to traditional working-class employment and values, due to the 'feminine' perceptions and connotations that have been consistently linked to these types of jobs (McDowell, 2001; Nayak, 2006; Roberts, 2011; Sennett, 1999; Webster et al., 2004). Overall then, it was also evident that the 'traditional' role of patriarchal 'breadwinner' via 'physical' employment (that had long been a feature of men's lives in Ayrefield) had been all but removed for the current male pupils at ACS (Bates, 1984; Hollands, 1990; McDowell, 2001; Nayak, 2006; Willis, 1977).

Perhaps inevitably, time spent in the local community suggested that these social changes had served to erode some of the commonality once prevalent in strong working-class communities like Ayrefield (Roberts, 2011; Scott, 2006) formerly dependent on a particular type heavy industry (coal mining). This process had not be helped by the subsequent closing down of several working men's clubs and sports facilities in Ayrefield previously linked to the mining industry. Indeed, there was also evidence to support claims that the once strong, and easily identifiable working-class population of previous generations in Ayrefield had become increasing divided and fragmented (Pahl, 1985; Savage et al., 2013) as part of a more 'diverse pool of social identities' (Scott, 2006: 55). Although these assumptions were primarily based on verbal communication both inside and outside of the school environment, there was certainly support for claims that the

residents of Ayrefield (and males in particular) no longer 'lived' aspects of their social class in the same way as their fathers and grandfathers may once have done. This was primarily due to the significant changes that had occurred to the nature of many residents' employment, wage levels, job security, and degrees of responsibility (Roberts, 2011; Scott, 2006).

This seemingly irreversible change to the economic and social make-up of Ayrefield had caused the lads at ACS to acknowledge the need to stay in school/college in order to enhance their chances of gaining a 'good' job. Secondly, there was also some evidence to suggest that Ayrefield (and surrounding villages) have become more meritocratic and individualised (Cannadine, 2000; Gillies, 2005; Reay, 2012). This had led to an increased awareness of the 'rough', 'respectable' (Roberts, 2011) and even so called 'no-go' areas that have been shown to be increasing features of working-class areas like Ayrefield (Crow & Maclean, 2005; Johnston et al., 2000; MacDonald & Marsh, 2005; Murie, 1998). This is not to say that a significant proportion of residents had made the transition into the middle-classes following the 1980s, or that some now lived in areas of extreme socio-economic deprivation. However, ONS data and general communication in school (and the wider community) suggested that types of employment, salary, and type of residency/post code appeared to have led to an apparent 'split' between the 'rougher' and 'respectable' families (Nayak, 2009; Roberts, 2011) around Ayrefield that would have been far less obvious when manual jobs linked to coal mines were ubiquitous. In relation to the study more specifically, there was some evidence that these 'rough' and 'respectable' working-class families/areas in Ayrefield may well have provided the basis on which to explain the subsequent split between the lads groups at ACS. However, in order to state this with any great conviction, further exploration based on data and further investigation would be required and then quantified in more detail.

Despite supporting evidence relating to the changing nature of Ayrefield as a town and community, however, the responses of the lads in focus groups interviews alone suggested that the concept of 'working-class' was not 'diminishing in importance' for its residents as has been claimed (Savage et al., 2013: 27). Indeed, as with the findings of similar studies (Johnston, et al., 2000; MacDonald & Marsh, 2005; MacDonald et al., 2005) it was evident from the attitudes and actions of the lads at ACS that a strong collective identity and lifestyle continued to exist among, and for, the people of Ayrefield. This had evidently led the lads to be influenced by, and in many cases value, the 'traditional' set of working-class values and actions that have been found in similar areas in Britain (Johnston et al., 2000; MacDonald & Marsh, 2005; MacDonald et al., 2005) such as physicality, aggression, and 'manliness' (Campbell, 1993; Dunning et al., 2004; Hobbs, 1994; McDowell, 2001).

It was also evident that the majority of lads across all three groups were well aware of, and continued to be influenced by, the masculine ideologies and expectations linked to being a 'hard' young man in Ayrefield. This matched evidence in previous studies (Campbell, 1993; Dunning et al., 2004; Hobbs, 1994; MacDonald & Marsh, 2001, 2005; McDowell, 2001; Nayak, 2006) that have highlighted the influence and significance of open aggression in families/ communities, the relative freedom youths enjoy from adult control, the prevalence of street-based socialisation, and the patriarchal dominance of most family relationships. It was also apparent that the lads across all three groups enjoyed, and to a large extent valued, the opportunity to regularly interact with friends, family, and neighbours with whom they shared common backgrounds, lifestyles, and interests. Not only has this been highlighted in other studies of working-class life (Giuliani, 2003; Livingston et al., 2008), but often results in working-class families (such as those present in Ayrefield) remaining as residents in these areas for several generations (Batty et al., 2011; Burrows

& Rhodes, 1998; Johnston et al., 2000; McDonald & Marsh, 2005; McDowell, 2001; Webster et al., 2004).

When considered in relation to particular groups of lads at ACS, it was the Problematic lads that were more clearly influenced by the masculine and working-class ethos that remained in Ayrefield. This was due to the fact that their physical reputations often provided them with the opportunity to match and reinforce their working-class identities and status as found previously (Clark & Uzzel, 2002; Johnson et al., 2000; Livingston et al., 2008; MacDonald & Marsh, 2005). This was especially the case when more formal avenues (academic ability) were neither available to, nor valued by them (Livingston et al., 2008; Webster et al., 2004). Evidence relating to the Problematic lads in particular also supported claims that this group of lads especially were responding to a 'crisis of masculinity' (McDowell, 2003; Roberts, 2011) brought about by changes to employment opportunities and working-class life generally. By engaging in alternative 'masculine' activities such as swearing, physical aggression/violence, or 'hanging about' on street corners, the actions of the Problematic lads matched the findings of previous studies (Hollands, 1995; MacDonald & Marsh, 2001; McDowell, 2002; Nayak, 2006) where young working-class males refashion their working-class identity to address the feminizing impact on working-class life.

Overall, therefore, for the Problematics in particular it was evident that the local neighbourhood continued to matter (MacDonald & Shildrick, 2007; Watt & Stenson, 1998) to these lads. Their strong sense of personal attachment to Ayrefield highlighted in similar studies (MacDonald, 2008; Savage, et al., 2005) was very much evident, not least because of the more pragmatic reasons found by other authors as a reason for young males to remain living in (or at least attached to) the area - such as family support, social interaction and searches for work (Butler & Robson, 2003, Cole & Green, 2010; Crisp & Robinson,

2010; Johnston et al., 2000; MacDonald et al., 2005; McDowell, 2001; Morris, 1995; Savage et al., 2005; Webster et al., 2004).

Although, focus group responses suggested that the Performers and Participants were not experiencing the same crisis of masculinity highlighted by McDowell (2003), it was evident that the strong place attachment found in other studies of working-class communities (MacDonald, 2008; Savage et al., 2005) was a significant 'pull' back to the relative 'comforts' of Ayrefield for many. Overall, therefore, despite significant changes to employment trends and the social make-up of Ayrefield caused by mass-deindustrialisation, traditional working-class values continued to impact on the actions and attitudes of all lads at ACS, which emerged as a significant influence on the overall findings of the study.

Parental influences

There was no common theme in the data to support previous claims that working-class families can negatively influence their children's attitude to learning and education by demonstrating and recalling their own negative attitudes and attainment at school (Archer & Yamashita, 2003; Lucey & Walkerdine, 2000). Neither was it apparent from lads' responses that their parents were accepting or unconcerned about their underachievement and/or inappropriate behaviour at school as has also been shown to be the case in some studies (Demie & Lewis, 2011). However, it would be accurate to say that there was a negative influence on the lads' preparation for school/education as a result of the manner in which that many lads at ACS were parented, both prior to and during their time at ACS. Focus group evidence at least, supported previous claims that parents of working-class pupils are less likely to be 'educated' themselves, as well as the fact that the structure and focus of the lads' home lives did not match that required in order to optimise the chances of their children engaging and attaining at school (Carter-Wall & Whitfield, 2012; Evans,

2006; Feinstein, 2003; Feinstein, 2004). Although there was no strong evidence of an overtly negative relationship between parents and staff at ACS, it was never apparent that parents of lads from any group enjoyed an academically beneficial 'partnership' with the school and its staff, of the kind that has been shown to have a significantly positive impact on a child's education (Bodovski, 2010; Demie & Lewis, 2011; Evans, 2006; Gewirtz, 2001; Vincent, 2001). Evidence in the study did support previous findings, however, that have suggested working-class parents are less likely to present themselves as role models regarding education in the way that middle-class parents have been shown to (Gutman & Eccles, 1999; Jodl et al., 2001; Mortimer & Kumka, 1982). Although the vast majority of parents of the lads at ACS did appear largely supportive and genuinely keen for their sons to do well at school, this seemed to come via the provision of physical needs highlighted previously by Lareau (2003), as well as the commonly stated use of financial rewards/incentives and strong pleas not to follow their own failings at school ("don't end up like me").

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, there was clear and consistent evidence that the parenting approaches of lads at ACS matched previous findings that have found that working-class parents are less likely to 'push' their children academically (Lucey & Walkerdine, 2000; Reay & Ball, 1998) and/or develop their more 'formal' skills, such as language development (Bodovski, 2010). Throughout the study, although the majority of lads felt that their parents wanted them to do 'well' at school, there was no evidence of the intense anxiety often found among middle-class mothers as highlighted by Reay (2000, 2004a) that often leads to a range of additional 'efforts' on their part to ensure the continued success of their children at school (Chambers, 2012; Levine-Rasky, 2009; Reay, 2004; Wheeler, 2014; Wheeler & Green, 2014). Overall, therefore, it was evident from the responses from lads in the focus groups that a lack of active parenting, proactive support, and academic attainment on the part of parents in Ayrefield had meant that the lads were

simply not set up for school. For the lads who did achieve academically at ACS, this seemed to have occurred *in spite* of their parents rather than *because* of them.

Educational engagement and working-class expectation

As an extension to the above, there was evidence that the conflict between academic engagement/success and masculinity was a consistent, if sometimes subconscious, influence (to varying degrees) for all lads at ACS. Lads across all three groups were consistently aware of the conflict that has been shown to exist between masculine expectations of working-class males and academic engagement and success (Ball, 1981; Brown, 1998; Hargreaves, 1967; Lacey, 1970; Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Willis, 1977) that further studies also state serve to restrict their children's chances of 'success' at school (see Archer et al., 2007; Ball et al., 2000; Carter-Wall & Whitfield, 2012; Connolly & Neill, 2001; Connolly & Healy, 2004; Evans, 2006; Feinstein, 2003, 2004; Healy, 2006; Ingram, 2009; MacDonald & Marsh, 2005; Reay & Lucey, 2000). Indeed, evidence in the study did support suggestions that for the working-class lads at ACS the process of schooling and learning was very much outside their lived experience (Ingram, 2009) compared to their middle-class peers (Archer et al., 2007; Bell et al., 1996; Gutman & Eccles, 1999; Jodl et al., 2001; Mortimer & Kumka, 1982).

Examining the split between the lads at ACS

One of the key findings to emerge in the study was the emergence of the three lads groups and the varying ways that they viewed, engaged in, and achieved at school despite their very similar working-class backgrounds. Although there was some evidence that suggested groups had been influenced by intra-class diversity - that is, the more 'respectable' lads were more inclined to be Performers with the Problematic lads more likely to contain 'rougher' working-class lads - it was indeed the Leaders banding system that emerged as a greater reason why the lads at ACS were drawn together and then split.

Initially, staff focus group responses and lesson observations suggested that informal pupil sub-groups emerged during most Y7 PE lessons. This appeared due to 'individual pupils [being] drawn together' as they began to assess their own behaviours and attitudes against that of others in the year/peer group (Hargreaves, 1967) via a process of 'subcultural differentiation' (Hargreaves, 1967: 9). During this process, it was evident that the lads began to 'weigh up' their own identities, behaviours, and values in relation to those around them in order to decide on who would be more suitable for them as friends, and by default whom best to avoid. This process of certain pupils gravitating to one another was then perpetuated and cemented by the school banding system in a manner akin to that described in similar studies (Ball, 1981; Hargreaves, 1967; Lacey, 1967). This impacted on the different ways that the respective groups were viewed and treated around school which subsequently led to them forming specific, isolated sub-cultures (Hargreaves, 1967) that developed as a direct result of their isolated timetables. There was also evidence that the Problematic lads in particular found that delinquent behaviour resulted in their sub-culture being perpetuated and reinforced over time (Hargreaves, 1967) to the point that they were viewed and even came to see themselves as a distinct social group.

Masculinity and lads groups

In addition to the sub-cultures and school banding system that existed at ACS, it was also evident that the varying ways that the lads valued and acknowledged the influence of working-class masculinity was a significant influence on the emergence and development of the three lads groups. It is worth highlighting initially that the very presence of the three lads groups at ACS was evidence in itself that diverse constructions and displays of masculinity existed at ACS in much the same way as found in similar studies (Brown, 1998;

Connell, 1995, 2008; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Gard, 2006; Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Parker, 1996). In relation to this, the ways in which the lads responded to the dominance of masculinity in their lives (school and home) demonstrated that 'traditional' working-class values were still evident in Ayrefield. However, it was also evident that an exalted, dominant, and idealised form of hegemonic masculinity existed at ACS. This not only linked to previous research (Connell, 1990, 1995, 2008; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005), but also supported claims that the consistent presence of an admired, dominant pattern of masculinity puts pressure on all boys (Frosh et al., 2002) due to the fact that a hegemonic masculinity has been shown to be the measure against which boys compare themselves (Tischler & McCaughy, 2011). Therefore, the existence of the traditional working-class hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1990, 2008) linked to Ayrefield, not only made all lads conscious of its presence and influence, but also led lads from differing groups to respond in sometimes subtle, but often significant ways at school. It is to this that this chapter will now turn.

Problematic lads at school

In relation to the Problematic lads, it was evident that they were the holders and protectors of this dominant form of masculinity. This, led to them engaging in overtly aggressive, masculine, disruptive and 'alternative' behaviours as found in previous similar studies (Archer et al., 2007; Nolan, 2011) in order to gain and maintain influence, authority, and status among their peers (Connell, 2008; Swain, 2010). There was also evidence that this privileged position was something that they were keen to protect due to the lengths they had gone to attain it - as found by Swain (2010). This had led, particularly in KS3, to incidents of bullying, intimidation, and physical violence. Indeed, there was also evidence among the Problematics to support previous claims that these lads that hold such a dominant position at school, were more likely to value their masculine 'honor' and

reputation over academic ability and achievements (Connell, 2008, Poynting et al., 2003) and/or conforming to the behavioural 'norms' associated with school (Kelly, 2009; Lawler, 2000; MacDonald & Marsh, 2005). As a result, the Problematics at ACS closely matched the attitudes and behaviours highlighted in other studies where a contagion of misbehaviour was evident (Kelly, 2009; McFarland, 2001). In this case, 'alternative' identities were created and developed by disrupting (often purposefully) the relatively highly-controlled environment of school by displaying oppositional, disruptive, and dismissive behaviour (Archer et al., 2007; Nolan, 2011). However, it was clear that in order to achieve and demonstrate this hegemonic masculinity, the majority of Problematics had been forced to demonstrate attitudes and behaviours that conflicted directly with educational engagement and attainment, as found in a plethora of previous studies (Archer et al., 2007; Connolly & Neill, 2001; Connolly & Healy, 2004; Evans, 2006; Ferguson, 2004; Healy, 2006; McKendrick et al., 2007; O'Donnell & Sharpe, 2000; Reay & Lucey, 2000; Smith, 2007).

One of the outcomes of this apparent clash between the Problematic lads and school itself was that they came to realise that their lives, skills, knowledge, and interests did not match the expectations of the formal school environment, as found in similar studies (Archer et al., 2007; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1979; Reay, 2004). Therefore, for the Problematic in particular, school effectively became a 'race from which they [had] already been disqualified' (Ball, 1981: 39). In addition, their actions, attitudes, and attainment at school led them to be treated differently by peers and members of staff. In this sense, this outcome matched previous claims that many working-class pupils are exposed to differing opportunities, pressures, and expectations at school (Daniels & Creese, 2004; Davies & Evans, 2001; Fitz et al., 2006; Gillborn & Youdell, 2000; Reay, 2006). There was also evidence via informal conversations with teachers at ACS that the poor attainment and engagement of the Problematics had been accepted uncritically by staff as an almost

inevitable outcome of their background, as found in similar studies (DfES, 2006; Smith, 2003 cited in Dunne & Gazeley, 2008). Perhaps the most alarming finding in this sense was evidence that the Problematic lads had come to view their lack of academic competence as 'natural', as claimed in previous studies (Archer et al., 2007; Charlesworth, 2000; DfES 2006 cited in Dunne & Gazeley, 2008; Reay, 2006; Reay & Wiliam, 1999) and that these lads had come to view themselves as naturally stupid, and 'nothings' in the formal school environment.

Given these outcomes, therefore, it is perhaps not surprising that in a manner highlighted in previous studies (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000; Lucey et al., 2003) the Problematics had evidently become steadily 'turned off' by school. The findings also highlighted the fact that the Problematics had come to possess low academic expectations and develop a greater reliance on vocational qualifications (Attwood et al., 2004; Demie & Lewis, 2011; Harris & Eden, 2000; Munn & Lloyd, 2005; Osler & Vincent, 2003) – not least because their college based course (e.g. bricklaying) and the manner in which they could act (e.g. swearing and smoking) allowed the lads to engage in more masculine activities shown to be more synonymous with working-class males (Hollands, 1995; MacDonald & Marsh, 2001; McDowell, 2002; Nayak, 2006).

However, the Problematic lads at ACS were unable to remove themselves completely from formal school life in the manner that Willis' (1977) 'lads' were able to do nearly 40 years ago. Instead, there was evidence that the Problematics were aware of the 'academic' expectations imposed on them highlighted in other contemporary studies (Leat, 2014). While this did not extend to the pressure to achieve academically, there was evidence that the Problematics were attempting to curtail aspects of their behaviour in order to stay in school and then make the 'next step' (McDowell, 2003) into college courses and/or apprenticeships. In this sense, although the evidence did support claims that 'bottom groups' are very often viewed and treated as hopeless cases unable to achieve

the desired five A*-C benchmark (Ball et al., 2012; Gilbourn & Youdell, 2000) it appeared that the Problematics were 'self-regulating' aspects of their behaviour in school due to the external pressures imposed on them as part of the government led performance culture in mainstream schools (Ball, 2003; Ball et al., 2012).

However, while the Problematics did appear intent on staying in school and progressing on to college, as with the findings of similar studies (Kelly, 2009) the 'expectations' from their peer groups were very often simply too strong to resist. This was largely influenced by the fact that academic 'success' and a 'pro-school' attitude has been shown to have the potential to lead to 'exclusion' from much-valued friendship groups (Lawler, 2000; MacDonald & Marsh, 2005) and a decrease in their 'popularity' (Kelly, 2009). Ultimately, the Problematic lads at ACS were 'caught between [the] still potent, although designating social networks of their childhood and youth, and the stark reality that there are no good working-class jobs' (Willis, 2004: xii) without first attending college. Indeed, 'those who leave school without acquiring credentials are almost invariably consigned to low-paying service jobs or long-term, sometimes permanent unemployment' (Willis, 2004: x).

Participant lads at school

It is difficult to address the emergence and experiences of the Participant group in school without appearing to dismiss them as a largely insignificant group. However, it is largely due to their relative insignificance that the Participant lads at ACS emerged during the study, as well as the fact that they seemed to exist within the school environment as a relatively distinct group. Perhaps more important, however, was the fact that this group (often by their own admission) were unable to generate and/or sustain any form of influence, authority, or status among their peer group that has been shown to be possible for those in 'possession' of hegemonic forms of masculinity (e.g Problematics) (Connell,

2008; Swain, 2010). Put simply, it appeared that a subconscious awareness existed among all lads at ACS (and to some extent the staff) that a 'middle' group of lads existed, but held no real significance. These findings, therefore, supported previous claims that it is the informal influence of the peer group that ultimately has the most significant fundamental influence on the construction of masculine identities in their often differing forms (Adler & Adler, 1998; Connolly, 1998; Connell, 2000; Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998; Mac an Ghaill, 1994).

As an outcome of this process and sense of awareness, there was further evidence to support findings that those lads were more likely to be placed towards the bottom of the social order (Swain, 2010). They were also viewed rather disparagingly or simply 'dismissed' (if only through being ignored) as being 'proper', and therefore significant, lads. Indeed, there was also evidence to support previous findings that these reactions were more likely among the lads/Participants who demonstrated positive attitudes and behaviours in school (Epstein et al., 2001; Jackson, 2002; Nayak & Kehily, 1996; Renold, 2001). Interestingly, there was some evidence that one or two of the Participants responded to the pressures of social acceptance - as highlighted by Connell (2000), to the extent that several lads demonstrated socially conforming behaviours as found in some previous studies (Connell, 2008; Frosh et al., 2002; Smith, 2007; Swain, 2010). This generally consisted of low-level disruptive behaviour especially when in the presence of the Problematics (e.g. changing rooms). However, in the vast majority of cases, it did seem that the Participants were aware that they could not compete and so had consciously chosen not to. Instead, it was apparent that the Participants intended to make the most of their relative isolation in order to enhance their chances of going on to college, which to some extent supported previous claims that such 'middle' pupils can become rather subservient in the learning process (Leat et al., 2012; Nystrand et al., 1997). In fact, in lesson observations the Participants were positively engaged in their learning, happy in their isolated classroom environment, and looking forward to progressing on to their college

courses. As a result, evidence suggested that the Participants were arguably the most content with the school's academic banding system in so far as they appeared able to indulge in the types of behaviours that may well have led to reprisals from peers. Ultimately, for the Participants, therefore, the Leaders system provided them with the opportunity to 'get through' school and progress towards aspirational, yet attainable, college and even university courses. There was also evidence to suggest that the Participants may be the most likely to benefit from the post-industrial service-based society that has been shown to be a strong feature of contemporary working-class life increasingly dependent on part-time and insecure employment and occupations (e.g. call centres) (Felstead & Jewson, 1999; Green & Owen, 2006; Hollands, 1995; MacDonald, 2008; McDowell, 2001; McKnight, 2002; Nayak, 2006; O'Donnell & Sharp, 2000; Roberts, 2011; Robinson, 1988; Shildrick et al., 2009).

Performer lads at school

There was a great deal of evidence to suggest that, as with similar studies (see Ball, 1981; Hargreaves, 1967; Lacey, 1970; Willis, 1979) the process of banding was influential in the subsequent experiences and achievements of the Performers at school. As described previously, it was evident that the Performers had been 'drawn together' as part of a process described by Hargreaves (1967: 9) as 'sub-cultural differentiation' where the Performers had initially gravitated towards one another, and then become isolated as part of the Future Leaders band. There was also evidence to further support the findings of Hargreaves (1967) in the sense that the Performers had taken on positive 'norms' within the group. This not only enhanced their performance at school, but also led to positive relationships with teachers, especially when/if they were viewed as 'future pathways to success' (Hargreaves, 1967: 174). By extension, there was a great deal of evidence to support claims that this 'top' group of pupils (Performers) had been provided with differing opportunities across the 'mixed' school population at ACS (Davies & Evans, 2001; Fitz et

al., 2006) in that they were offered the opportunity to pursue GCSE and AS level qualifications where others were not.

As a direct consequence of this higher ability and expectation, however, findings supported studies linked to other supposedly 'better' pupils, in that the Performers were consistently faced with greater pressures and expectations at school (Daniels & Creese, 2004; Fitz et al., 2006; Gillborn & Youdell, 2000; Reay, 2006). Timetabling and lesson observations also supported evidence that these expectations and pressures led to stark differences in the quality of teaching (Boaler et al., 2000; Dunne & Gazeley, 2008; Harris & Ranson, 2005) especially between the 'top' Performer group and the 'bottom' Problematics.

Overall, therefore, it was clear that the Performers had emerged as a top group of academic male pupils as a direct result of the school banding system. However, it did seem that the majority of the Performers were very much 'victims' of the increasing commodification of British education (Ball, 2003; Ball et al., 2012; Leat, 2014) in that the ever-increasing pressures and expectations imposed on teachers have led to progress and achievement becoming enmeshed in school life (Watson & Hay, 2003) and schools (and pupils) being perennially involved in an all consuming need to achieve and improve grades and inspection levels (Gillborn & Youdell, 2000; Leat, 2014; Loveday, 2008). In relation to the Performers more specifically as part of this system, there was a great deal of evidence that they had adopted a very pragmatic view of school and education resulting in them viewing qualifications in particular as a stepping stone towards further/higher education qualifications. In line with previous research, therefore, it was evident that the Performers had adopted a strong desire to simply 'know the answers' (Hockings, 2009; Leat et al., 2012) so that they could progress towards the types of jobs that would be financially rewarding. Further testament to this attitude towards school appeared in the responses that matched those of many working-class lads in that the main reason that they came to

school were purely social (O'Donnell & Sharpe, 2000; Ridge, 2002) such as 'having a laugh' with friends.

Even with this pragmatic and results driven attitude to their education, however, there was evidence to support several claims that more able pupils such as the Performers at ACS had felt the need to manage the conflicts that appeared to exist between their educational engagement and masculine/working-class expectations (Archer et al., 2007; Connolly & Healy, 2004; Connolly & Neill, 2001; Evans, 2006; Healy, 2006; Ingram, 2009; MacDonald & Marsh, 2005; O'Donnell & Sharpe, 2000; Reay, 2004; Reay & Lucey, 2000). This was due to the fact that their positive relationships with teachers, strong academic profiles, and positive behaviour in school conflicted with the hegemonic masculinity dominant at ACS. However, the Performers did appear to have managed to achieve what has been described as the seemingly impossible in working-class schools (Archer et al., 2007; Ingram, 2011; MacDonald & Marsh, 2005) by utilising their (often strong) sporting ability to their advantage. There was no evidence that this was gained as a result of any conscious effort to take on a 'bright but naughty' tag described in others studies (Lucey & Walkerdine, 2000; Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Smith, 2007) in order to conform to the masculine expectations and subsequently remain popular (Connell, 2000; 2008; Frosh et al., 2002; Smith, 2007; Swain, 2010). Neither was there any obvious evidence to support previous findings that the 'clever' or 'studious' behaviour towards schoolwork (Epstein et al., 2001; Nayak & Kehily, 1996; Renold, 2001) displayed by the Performers led to soft' or 'weak' versions of masculinity being viewed extremely disparaging (Smith, 2007) – such as the Problematics bullying or intimating the Performers in this case. However, it was clear that the Performers were able to generate and sustain elements of the dominant hegemonic masculinity alongside their academic studies and identities due to the strong ability to play football 'properly' both during their leisure time and in school fixtures.

Leisure and parental influence

The following section will address the leisure profile of the lads at ACS in order to highlight how and why the activities that the lads participated in outside of school (as well as the manner in which they took part) came to impact on their PE experiences at ACS.

Wider social and parental influences on the lads' leisure profiles and sports participation

The responses presented in the findings went a long way to supporting previous studies that state that high levels of physical activity remain prevalent among young people in contemporary society (Breedveld, 2003; Coalter, 2004; De Knop & De Martelaer, 2001; Kirk, 2004; ONS, 1999; Roberts, 1995, 1996, 2004; SCW, 2003; Smith & Green, 2004; Sport England, 2015; Scheerder et al., 2005a, 2005b; Telama et al., 2002). The study also found that the vast majority of lads at ACS seemed physically active for significant periods of their free time. However, in relation to *what* they were doing, it was evident that almost all lads at ACS participated in a narrower range of sports, as found in similar studies in this area (Dagkas & Stathi, 2007; Duncan et al., 2004; Green et al., 2005), and that the *types* of activities in which the lads were are likely to engage in were evidently deemed suitable and appropriate to their social class background (Abercrombie & Ward, 2000; Crossley, 2001; Dagkas & Stathi, 2007; Engstrom, 2008; Kirk, 2005; Roberts, 2012; Wilson, 2002; Wright & Burrows, 2006).

There was very little evidence that the lads at ACS engaged to any substantial degree with organised sport as stated in previous studies (Brettschneider, 1992; Telama et al., 2005) relating to young people in contemporary society. However, there was evidence that many of the lads across all three groups appeared to have 'dabbled' in a range of sports and activities in a manner that Roberts (1999) states is synonymous with the leisure profiles of young people. Instead, it was clear the lads from all three groups at ACS preferred to spend their leisure time playing recreationally with friends. In this regard, the findings supported evidence that socialising recreationally with groups of like-minded people is a strong reason for the lads to leave their home environment after school and at

weekends (Miles, 2000; Roberts, 1999, 2004). This was apparently not only for the enjoyment of taking part, but also to experience the strong feelings of excitement, enjoyment, and increased self-confidence (Roberts, 1999, 2004; Shildrick, 2002) related to such social leisure pursuits.

Recreational time spent at The Cage provided the lads with an opportunity to spend enjoyable periods of time away from school and home, playing in a relaxed and relatively unorganised manner that has been shown to be important to many young working-class males (Biddle, Whitehead, O'Donovan, & Nevill, 2005; Elias & Dunning, 1986; Roberts, 1999, 2004; Shildrick, 2002, 2006). It was also evident that going to The Cage, as well as engaging in other class-related recreational activities (such as cycling, fishing or 'Manhunt') were 'played' in a manner synonymous with other studies linked to young working-class people; that is, relatively close to home while in the company of friends and/or those with similar social backgrounds (Cricher, 2006; Harrington, 2006; Hollands, 2002; MacRae, 2004 cited in Roberts, 2012). Indeed, as participation in any physical activity outside of school almost exclusively involved school friends and peers, this supported claims that young working-class people are much more likely to participate in active leisure in a more recreational manner, with classmates, peers and even siblings (Stuij, 2013).

For the lads in Ayrefield, therefore, areas like The Cage and periods where they simply 'hung about' [about] with friends demonstrated that activities such as these remained highly favoured by almost all lads. This was due to the fact that this type of participation enabled them to socialise, maintain a sense of freedom from parental control, and even begin to construct their own identities as found previously (Arai & Pedler, 2003; Clark & Uzzell, 2002; Cotterell, 2007; Green, 2010; Roberts, 2008). There was also evidence to support previous studies in that the working-class lads of Ayrefield may even have developed social and organizational skills, especially through their time spent at The Cage (Bernstein, 1974; Nielsen et al., 2012; Schultz, 1999; Stuij, 2013). This facility also proved

popular due to the fact that the accessibility and availability of The Cage avoided constraints (such as financial limitations) that have been found by other authors to limit the participation of working-class families in sport (Bourdieu, 1990, Critcher, 2006; Dagkas & Quarmby, 2012; Devís-Devís et al., 2013; Green, 2010; Kraaykamp et al., 2013; Quarmby & Dagkas, 2012; Roberts, 2006, 2012; Roberts & Brodie, 1992). However, it was also evident that the wider cultural factors in the lads' background that have been shown to be influential regarding types of participation (Bourdieu, 1984; Critcher, 2006; Engstrom, 2008; Green, 2010; Hollands, 2002; Roberts, 2006, 2012; Roberts & Brodie, 1992) were also highly influential in what the lads in Ayrefield chose to do, when, and with whom. In this regard, as with several related studies, it was evident that a much more complex interplay of social contexts, relationships, and influences were impacting on the 'choices' the lads were making regarding their leisure time and sport participation (Devís-Devís et al., 2013; Wright et al., 2003) and that these related closely to social class differences highlighted previously (Dagkas & Stathi, 2007; Humbert et al., 2006; Pot et al., 2014; Stuij, 2013). In short, the findings supported research that has suggested that the social network in which a young person is brought up directly influences their range and type of sports participation, as well as their involvement in other leisure activities (Bourdieu, 1984; Dagkas & Stathi, 2007; Duncan et al., 2004; Kraaykamp et al., 2013; Macdonald et al., 2004; Quarmby & Dagkas, 2010; Wheeler, 2012). In addition, it was also evident in the study that these adolescents matched findings linked to similar young working-class people in that they were strongly influenced by the actions and attitudes of a range of different people (family, friends, and peers for instance) and institutions (schools), regarding what they do, when, and whom they do it with (Bourdieu, 1984; Critcher, 2006; Engstrom, 2008; Green, 2010; Hollands, 2002; Roberts, 2006, 2012; Roberts & Brodie, 1992). In relation to parents and family more specifically, it was clear from the findings in the study that lads at ACS were not party to the heavy, strategic, and highly structured investment that many

middle-class parents have been shown to embark on in order to adequately and effectively 'resource' their children (Ball, 2003, 2009; Birchwood et al., 2008; Chambers, 2012; Evans, 2004; Evans & Davies, 2010; Levine-Rasky, 2009; Reay, 2000, 2004; Wheeler, 2014; Wheeler & Green, 2014). Neither was there any evidence that the working-class parents within this study were actively engaged in any form of 'concerted cultivation' regarding their offspring (Bodovski, 2010; Irwin & Elley, 2011; Lareau, 2003) or that they saw participation in physical activity and sports clubs/initiatives as an everyday 'task' to be incorporated into their everyday routines, as has been found among middle-classes families and parents (Harrington, 2009; Kay, 2009; Lareau, 2002; MacDonald et al., 2004; Wright et al., 2003; Shaw, 2008; Stuij, 2003; Wheeler, 2014, Wheeler & Green, 2014). By extension, there was also little evidence to support claims that working-class parents (such as those from Ayrefield) can often provide the same levels of support and encouragement as those from the middle-classes (Pot et al., 2014; Stuij, 2013; Wheeler, 2012). Indeed in some cases, the lack of support from parents/carers had led several promising young players to cease playing football due to an inability (and even unwillingness) to regularly attend fixtures and training.

In addition to the influence of parents, it was also clear that the leisure lifestyles of lads in Ayrefield were strongly influenced by the preferences and social resources of their friends as previously shown (Allender et al., 2006; Critcher, 2006; Dagkas & Stathi, 2007; Green, 2010; Roberts, 2006, 2012; Roberts & Brodie, 1992). More specifically, there was a great deal of evidence to support findings that young people are much more likely to take part in leisure/sporting activities among close friends with similar social origins and educational backgrounds, who are heading towards similar class destinations (Critcher, 2006; Hollands, 2002; MacRae, 2004 cited in Roberts, 2012).

Ultimately, therefore, although seemingly physically active in their leisure time, there was very little evidence in the study that what the lads from Ayrefield were engaged in

could be utilised/built upon by PE staff at ACS. Indeed, for almost all lads at ACS, their focus groups responses suggested that the types of activities in which they were engaged outside of school (e.g. fishing, snooker), the manner in which they participated (recreationally with friends), and their lack of exposure to structured lifestyles that involved deliberate practice and/or competitive sport, meant that the majority of lads at ACS were neither inclined nor 'set up' to participate in the types of activities or lessons (structured and drill-based) that may well have extended their sporting repertoires.

Physical Education at ACS

When the influence of the lads' leisure profiles is considered in relation to PE, it was evident that the vast majority of lads living in Ayrefield were much less able (and willing) to the 'hit the ground running' as has been shown to be the case among many middle class pupils who arrive at school in a greater state of 'learning readiness' (Ball, 2009: 9). There was no evidence that the PE staff at ACS would ever be able to build on the existing skills, attitudes, and knowledge of their pupils (Evans & Davies, 2010) due to the types of parenting to which the lads at ACS had been exposed and the narrow of sporting repertoires and skills that had emerged from their upbringing. It has already been stated that despite most lads at ACS being physically active in their leisure time, this involvement was restricted to a narrow range of 'working-class' activities (football) played recreationally within the local community. In addition, the findings have also indicted that despite some varied experiences during PE (especially for the Participants and Performers) almost all lads at ACS favour the playing of football in PE if/where possible. Subsequently, the lads' attitudes towards 'other' activities (both now and in the past) meant that they all arrived (to varying extents) with a very narrow range of physical ability, as well as a very limited knowledge and interest in any sport other than football.

Physical education and masculinity

In the first instance, there was a great deal of evidence to support claims that PE remained an important and valued subject for the lads at ACS as a result of its physical and competitive nature that has been shown to be highly valued by working-class males (Bramham, 2003; Hargreaves, 1994; Hickey, 2008; Messner, 1988, 1990; Messner & Sabo, 1990; Sabo & Runfola, 1980). Not all lads were able (or willing) to engage in the competitive, physical, and sometimes aggressive nature of PE at ACS that is synonymous with the nature of PE in other studies (Flintoff, 1993; Jackson, 1990; Mac an Ghaill, 1996; Parker, 1996; Swain, 2010). However, it was evident that all lads at ACS could not help being influenced by these characteristics and values that were very much present in many PE environments. Therefore, it was clear that in support of previous studies, PE at ACS was a site for the construction and display of hegemonic masculinities (Braham, 2003; Epstein et al., 2001; Fitzclarence & Hickey, 2001) and that PE at ACS was a place where boys must 'be' and behave like boys, by producing exalted forms of masculinity linked to strength, aggression, heterosexuality, and toughness (Braham, 2003; Connell, 1990; Light & Kirk, 2000; Parker, 1996; Pringle, 2008; Swain, 2000).

Problematic lads in PE and masculinity

Given the lack of academic success, difficult relationships with many of their academic teachers, and peer status achieved through their 'masculine' behaviours in and out of school, it was perhaps not surprising that 'PE' was much more important to the Problematic lads than most other aspects of formal school life (Connell, 2008; Poynting et al., 2003). This was due to the fact that physical games of football provided the Problematics with an environment that was much more synonymous with the values of 'real' working-class males (Hollands, 1995; MacDonald & Marsh, 2001; McDowell, 2002; Nayak, 2006). For these Problematic lads, therefore, it was evident that by KS4, the subject of PE and the playing

of large scale, competitive games of football in particular, had emerged as the opportunity to promote the sense of male domination (Hargreaves, 1994; Messner, 1988, 1990; Messner & Sabo, 1990; Sabo & Runfola, 1980) that stood in stark contrast to their feminising and often demoralising experiences of general school life. More specifically, one could go as far to suggest that these 'PE lessons' were indeed much removed from the true aims and objectives of the subject - where skill and social development are the main focus - and instead lessons were effectively sporting arenas where playing the 'right' way was emblematic of gender itself (Connell, 2000, 2008; Gruneau & Whitson, 1993). Therefore, the Problematic lads were keen to ensure that PE consistently provided them with the opportunity to engage in competitive sport. These types of PE lessons would then become 'an open stage' for them to 'perform their masculinities on a regular basis' in what were essentially 'highly visible, ritualised and stylised exhibitions' (Swain, 2000: 108) of 'what masculinity should be' (Edley & Wetherall, 1995: 129). The fact that the Problematic lads were so keen to only play competitive sport in 'PE' was evidently due to the fact that the 'hidden curriculum' at work in these environments was providing important opportunities for them to impose themselves forcefully (Hickey, 2008). There was also opportunity for these lads to demonstrate many dominant masculine characteristics and attributes such as hardness, lack of empathy, strength, power, aggression and 'heterosexuality' that have consistently been shown to be important aspects of performing sport/PE for young males (Bramham, 2003; Connell, 1990; Hague & Haavind, 2011; Hay & Macdonald, 2010; Kirk, 1993; Messner, 1992; Messner & Sabo, 1994; Miedzian, 1992; Parker, 1996; Swain, 2000; Tischler & McCaughtry, 2011). Indeed, it was clear from lesson observations that the KS4 'PE lessons' for the Problematic lads had become a very important arena for acting out hyper-masculinities (Messner & Sabo, 1990; Paechter, 2003) that for many was the highlight of their school week.

At this point it seems important to highlight the link between the dominance of

football in the lads' leisure profiles at The Cage, and the strong desire for them to participate in similar activities during PE. Not only was football something that the Problematic lads could play with confidence due to their relative ability in the sport, but the large games of football that made up these lessons were almost entirely predicated on a level of physicality that 'personifies the acme of masculinity, and communicates ideals of fitness, strength, competition, power and domination' (Swain, 2000: 107). Indeed, the strong desire for the Problematic lads to play football in PE supported previous claims that the sport of football in the UK acts as a key signifier in constructing hegemonic masculinities in schools (Connelly, 1998; Nayak, 2003; Renold, 1997; Skelton, 2000; Swain, 2000). Therefore, the platform that competitive football provided for these lads to become a 'real boy' (Swain, 2010) enabled them to respond to the social pressures and expectations in order to demonstrate their masculine identity (Messner & Sabo, 1994). In addition, it was also evident that football played in this manner by the Problematics at ACS provided the kind of social landscape that enabled the lads to engaged in 'successful' masculinity via the time-honored tradition of working-class masculine heritage (Smith, 2007). Ultimately, therefore, football was clearly a key component in the formation and reinforcement of boys' masculinity (Swain, 2010) where the aggressive intent, winners/losers, territorial dominance, loyalty and commitment matches what Messner & Sabbo (1994: 38) state as 'to be manly in sports, traditionally means to be competitive, successful, dominating, aggressive, stoical, goal-directed and physically strong'.

It was perhaps not surprising, therefore, given the issues highlighted above, that the Problematic lads consistently acted repressively to quell any challenge to this status as stated in previous studies (Parker, 1996; Swain, 2000). This was done by consistently and strongly refusing to take part in most activities, as well as the types of lessons that stood to jeopardise the social status that they had derived from the public displays of

physical prowess and masculinity. Engagement in feminine activities such as hockey, being seen to fail in football drills, or even failing publicly (marines fitness session) was something that they often avoided at all costs and acted proactively and sometimes aggressively to avoid.

Impact of Problematic lads' actions on PE staff

As a consequence of this often-extreme behaviour on the part of the Problematic lads, the PE staff subsequently adapted the KS4 curriculum and the nature of the lessons in order to minimise the likelihood of disruption, confrontation, and non-participation (Cothran et al., 2009; Green, 2003). In the first instance, there was evidence that the content and delivery of KS3 PE had been dominated by competitive games of football in order to address very similar issues relating to the Problematics actions and attitudes. However, more significantly, the level of threat and subsequent power posed by the KS4 Problematic lads (especially those nearing the end of Y11) meant that they were consistently provided with the 'option' of large-scale, competitive football matches in PE. Therefore, this did support aspects of previous studies that have found that KS4 PE options are increasingly linked to more 'relevant' activities (Azzarito & Solomon, 2005; Bramham, 2003; Cook-Sather, 2002; Flintoff & Scraton, 2001; Oliver, 2010; Roberts, 1996; Smith & Parr, 2007; Smith et al., 2009). However, more realistically, these activities were more rigidly 'offered' by PE staff (Bramham, 2003; Smith et al., 2009) as a way of managing the threat of disruption, confrontation, and non-participation, where forced alternatives (tennis) or even seemingly more suitable options (rugby, basketball, cricket) would have led to a very different outcome.

Impact of masculinity on Performers and Participants in KS4 PE options

There was also evidence that the production and reinforcement of the characteristics linked

to hyper-masculinity were even evident outside of the lesson environment and it was this direct and indirect interaction with peers that emerged as another key theme in the study. In the first instance, observations that took place in the changing rooms ahead of lessons supported previous evidence that the 'minority...dominates the masses' (Sabo, 1994: 86) in the sense that Problematic lads consistently demonstrated both conscious and sub-conscious displays of aggressive behaviours and attitudes in an attempt to reinforce 'already formed gender identities' (Sabo, 1994: 38). Secondly, and perhaps more significantly, it was also evident that playing football in particular had previously (and currently) afforded the Problematic lads the opportunity to attain high levels of social status in the PE setting (Hill, 2013). This was due to the fact that the physical and competitive nature of the football played in PE lessons privileged the behaviors and traits linked to hegemonic masculinities over others (Bramham, 2003; Drummond, 2003; Larsson et al., 2009; Parker, 1996). Therefore, the manner in which the Problematic lads acted and behaved in football lessons throughout their time at ACS had supported previous claims that aggressive and masculine forms of behavior were dominant (Parker, 1996) and that for certain pupils in particular, a masculine authority could be established within the peer group (Swain, 2010). In relation to the current situation in KS4 PE lessons at ACS, it was clear (as highlighted above) that lads who had chosen to play large-scale games of football in PE were not only aware of the social pressures linked to a need to display the dominant pattern of masculinity, but that they were relatively content (and able) to respond to the peer-pressure linked to being a 'real boy' (see, for example, Adler & Adler, 1998; Connell, 2000; Connolly, 1998; Gilbert & Gilbert, 1998; Mac an Ghail, 1994) that was almost palpable in such lessons (Frosh et al., 2002). However, when considered over a longer period, KS3 lesson observations and focus group responses supported suggestions that school generally, and PE lessons in particular, had led to near constant pressure from the peer group regarding how these working-class lads should perform and behave (Connell,

2000). In relation to this, there was evidence to suggest the peer/year groups at ACS had consistently both defined and policed what it was to be a 'real male' (Connell, 2000; Lesko, 2000; Swain, 2010) within the hyper-masculine, 'cut and thrust' world (Connell, 2000: 162) of the PE and school environment at ACS. Subsequently, this had led some lads to be willing and/or able to 'take up the offer' of aspiring to, or responding to, these collective group norms and behaviors (Problematics) (Smith, 2007). In contrast, others had become 'cut off', denigrated, and/or viewed disparagingly as has been consistently shown to be the case for those young males either unable or unwilling to match the strong masculine expectations of the peer group (Hickey, 2008; Hickey & Keddle, 2004; Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Michaelis, 2000; Mills, 2001; Newman et al., 2001; Pringle, 2004, 2005; Skelton, 2001; Walker, 1988). Ultimately, therefore, it did seem that relative splits had emerged among the lads in each year group that were based on sporting prowess, physical strength, aggression, and masculinity. This process had not only generated and accentuated a social pecking-order in each year group during PE (Paechter, 2003), but led to activity choices being based upon lads perceptions of whether they were 'up to the job' of being a real boy or not. Those at the top of the pecking order were able to display their hegemonic masculinity and even profit from it in the form of status and prestige by 'selecting' football in KS4 PE. However, those unwilling or unable to do so seemingly chose the non-football option as a means of removing themselves from the social pressures linked to hyper-masculinity consistently evident in PE lessons at ACS.

Participant lads in PE

For the group seemingly 'left behind', there was evidence to support previous claims that the hyper-masculine environment of the football matches in KS4 PE options privileged some (Problematics) whilst serving to marginalize the Participants who were unable to (re)produce the influential form of masculinity (e.g., Connell, 1990; Hasbrook & Harris, 1999; Kenway & Fitzclarence, 1997; Light & Kirk, 2000; Parker, 1996; Pringle, 2008;

Skelton, 1996; Skelton, 2000; Swain, 2000). In this context, it was evident from the Participant lads' selections that their experiences during KS3 had led to their behaviours and abilities being calibrated against the dominant and somewhat expected level/type of masculinity prominent in these types of lessons (Hickey, 2008). Their decision to remove themselves from the large-scale, competitive football lessons alongside the Problematic boys, therefore, was very much a conscious decision based on their inability to match the physical demands expected in these lessons (Gard, 2011). Indeed, some comments within the findings supported research by Swain (2010) in that the Participants were well aware that the more dominant Problematics viewed them as subordinate. However, there was actually little evidence to support similar claims that lads such as the Participants in this case experienced negative outcomes such as name calling, oppression, and even violence, due to the fact that they were unable to demonstrate the hegemonic masculinity valued and perpetuated at ACS (Gard, 2011; Hickey, 2008; Hickey & Keddie, 2004; Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Michaelis, 2000; Mills, 2001; Millington et al. 2008; Paechter, 2003; Parker, 1996; Pringle, 2004, 2005, 2008; Swain, 2010; Tischler & McCaughtry, 2011). In fact, the attitude between the two groups was rather one of ambivalence and inevitability regarding the way the KS4 was structured and delivered, rather than one involving any form of derision or intimidation.

There was also no real evidence either to support claims that the PE teachers were necessarily marginalizing less able/masculine groups such as the Participants at ACS. At no point was there clear evidence that these lads were being viewed as being second rate by PE staff as a result of them not being able to demonstrate the 'right' types of ability (Evans & Davies, 2011; Hunter, 2004; Rich et al., 2004; Tischler & McCaughtry, 2011) or that they were viewed as a deviant, lazy, or unmotivated (Parker, 1996). In fact, there was evidence that the PE staff much preferred working with the 'less able' Participants partly due to fact that the behaviour of the group enabled the PE teachers to plan and deliver

lessons that led to some degree of learning and progress among the pupils. However, much of the reason for this positive relationship and lack of derision from the PE staff did relate to the fact that the Participants were consistently presented with an alternative option that enabled the vast majority take part in the subject that they enjoyed (if not the activity) alongside friends, away from intimidating Problematic lads. In relation to this, these choices of the Participants to take part in indoor activities, away from the Problematics, did to some extent challenge previous claims that boys whose masculinities are marginalized are too often seen as victims, who have little efficacy against their domination (Drummond, 2003). In fact, it was actually the case that in a similar way to that described by Tischler & McCaughtry (2011), the Participants were actually engaging in task avoidance as a form of resistance, rather than a form of oppression; that is to say, the Participants were deliberately choosing the 'non-football' option not only as a way to avoid overtly masculine environments that led to domination, intimidation and shame, but to take part in activities that they actually enjoyed (Braham, 2003; Tischler & McCaughtry, 2011) in the company of their friends.

In this regard, the PE experiences of the Participants were not ones that they could consciously control. However, it was evident that their PE lessons emerged as largely positive experiences in KS4 (which had not been the case in KS3) due to the fact that they were among friends and isolated from the negative impact of the Problematic lads in much the same way as they were around school more generally as a result of their Leaders groupings. There was even evidence that the Participants chose to exert their own dominance over the Problematics by valuing their academic competence and increased future success (Bramham, 2003; Parker, 1996), which appeared to help them manage their relative physical inferiority and lack of social status.

Performers in PE

For the Performers it was evident that this was a group that benefited greatly from the isolation that their Leaders group provided. They evidently appreciated the opportunity to isolate themselves from the near permanent pressures linked to hegemonic masculinity that was such a significant and consistent influence of the relationship between Participants and Problematic and their respective PE experiences. That is not to say that they were not aware and still influenced by the social pressure imposed on them. However, the different lessons, qualifications, and expectations enabled the Performers to generate and develop social norms that contrasted with those expected by most at ACS, without any fear of direct reprisal.

However, there was a clear link between PE experiences of the Performers and the way that they experienced and approached their other 'academic' subjects – an issue which was accentuated by their following of GCSE (Y10) and AS (Y11) level courses. In this regard, the fact that these students had been fast-tracked onto the 'academic courses (compared to BTEC) in an attempt to promote school KS4 pass figures, supported claims that schools are developing 'ingenious' means for reaching targets (Leat, 2014). There was also evidence that although this group could have easily achieved top marks in BTEC courses and subsequently been left to progress towards this with little intervention from PE staff, the following of GCSE/AS courses meant these high achievers were not allowed 'get on with it' as found in similar studies (Ball et al., 2012; Gillbourn & Youdell, 2000). Therefore, it was clear that the Performers were very much embroiled in the increasingly commodified world of British education as part of their PE lessons (Ball, 2003; Ball et al., 2012; Leat, 2014) and that they were influenced by the pressures that have been shown to be enmeshed in their regular normal school lives (Watson & Hay, 2003).

As a result of these influences, therefore, both academic and practical PE lessons for the Performers involved them consistently engaging in a type of 'surface learning' that highlighted by Ball et al (2012). This related to an overt desire to receive the knowledge

and information that would enable them to pass the exams or in this case the practical assessment in activities such as volleyball (Hockings, 2009; Leat et al., 2012). Therefore, although the Performers appeared to engage positively in all aspects of their respective GCSE and AS level courses, their approach, attitude, and commitment to all aspects of their studies was very much pragmatic in that they simply wanted to know how to pass the exam and receive the best possible grade. With regards to their involvement in practical activities in PE, there was also very little intention evident that they would ever pursue any of the activities covered in their KS4 PE lessons outside of the school environment.

The Performers had also adopted the types of assessment-led, pragmatic, and even competitive actions and behaviour, both individually and collectively, that mirrored the pressures and expectations of their school lives more generally. As a result, not only were the Performers clearly over-achieving in response to the external demands and pressures imposed on them by school, their PE teachers and parents, but a strong sense of inter-group competition was evident that meant that they would do whatever it took in practical PE lessons in order to get the extra marks needed for general success, as well as a 'one up' over their friends.

In this sense, therefore, despite a strong favouring of football (as with their peers from the other two groups) and a lack of commitment or desire to expanding their sporting repertoires with any real degree of conviction, the Performers were content in submitting to the requests and expectations of the PE staff in their practical PE lessons because doing so enabled them to achieve their broader educational goals. Therefore, the Performers did not engage in any form of active negotiation in their KS4 PE lessons because they had a vested interest in maintaining the status quo; that was, to follow what was asked of them by PE staff in order to achieve the best possible grade in the subject. Ultimately, therefore, the Performers were content to apply the same approach to PE as they had to the rest of the studies, and leave the playing of football with friends as a purely out of school pursuit.

From a PE teachers' perspective, when viewed in relation to their attitudes and approaches to lessons with the other two groups, it was evident that the outcomes of the Performers in the form of tangible examination grades was perhaps the most prominent feature of their working lives. Not only did this support claims regarding the pressures imposed on all teachers in the modern British education system, (Ball et al., 2012; Leat et al., 2012) but also highlighted the fact that examinable PE and pupil success in final examinations was more important than the broader physical learning and development of the lads – not least because of the publication of lads' final works and the negative implications linked to actual and relative failure (Leat, 2014).

PE teachers' views and influences on lads at ACS

As previously indicated, the lads across all three groups at ACS arrived with a relatively narrow range of physical/sporting experiences when compared with that more common among middle-class pupils. However, there was no real evidence that the PE staff at ACS viewed this lack of ability across a range of sports (and in PE more generally), as being ingrained in the 'positive eugenic perspective', as some authors suggest is often the case in relation to young working-class pupils (Hay, 2005: 44). Nor was there any evidence to suggest that the lads' apparent lack of ability in activities other than football was seen by PE staff as being 'natural' products of their biology (Bird, 1994; Evans & Davies, 2004; Evans et al., 2009; Hart, 1998; Wilkinson et al., 2013) or a 'one-dimensional, static entity' (Evans, 2004: 98-99) as suggested by others. Indeed, it was evident that the PE staff at ACS had not failed to acknowledge 'the social, cultural and, economic influences that may have led to their pupils demonstrating particular interests and levels and ranges of ability' as Ball (2009: 15) claims is often the case in many working-class schools. Neither was there any evidence in the study that the PE staff at ACS saw a need to make up for what some PE teachers in working-class schools have been found to view as the innate deficiencies

in their (working-class) students' characters and lives (Evans, 2004; Wright & Burrows, 2006).

Although the PE staff did acknowledge that the abilities of most lads at ACS was very difficult to change, this was not due to the fact that they saw these abilities among the lads at ACS as innate, as some suggest might be the case in working-class schools (Wright & Burrows, 2006). Indeed, the PE staff in the present study clearly saw the lads' ability as a socially constructed concept and a product of their social background (Evans, 2004). Conversations and focus group responses highlighted the fact that the PE staff consistently viewed and acknowledged the ability of lads arriving at ACS as a 'social formation' that had emerged and developed as a result of the lads' social background, material conditions, and relationships linked to their social class background and culture (Evans & Davies, 2008). This appeared to relate not only to the PE teachers' knowledge of the local areas but also their own working-class backgrounds.

Despite, this apparent awareness on the part of the PE teachers that the abilities, knowledge, and interests of the lads at ACS were socially constructed, it was evident that PE at ACS had followed the trend away from developing and addressing ability in mainstream PE highlighted by some authors (Evans, 2004; Evans & Davies, 2008). In relation to this, the study provided evidence that opportunities for pupils to develop their abilities, physical literacy, and physical intelligence have been devalued and all but lost in many schools, and at ACS in this particular case (Evans, 2004; Wright & Burrows, 2006). In relation to PE at ACS, therefore, lesson observations consistently suggested that a focus on enhancing the physical ability of pupils was not the main priority in the vast majority of lessons. As a result, PE at ACS was failing to challenge and change 'the 'ability' deficit...and differences that children [and those at ACS specifically in this case] develop outside school' (Evans, 2004: 101) despite an awareness among the PE staff that the vast

majority of lads at ACS needed, and would no doubt have benefitted, from a broader range of activity experiences.

It was difficult to state, however, that this lack of focus on developing physical literacy/intelligence and ability in PE was due to increased focus on motivation, health-related behaviour, 'fitness', 'talent' for 'performance', and participation in organized sport as some authors suggest (Evans, 2004; Evans & Davies, 2008). Instead it was very much apparent that it was the attitudes and actions of the lads themselves (and in many cases the Problematics in particular) combined with the wider pressures linked to the modern education system that had influenced, and in many cases constrained, the actions of the PE teachers.

If KS3 PE at ACS is considered initially, it was clear that the PE teachers were being indirectly influenced in the ways that they structured and delivered PE by lads' pursuit of status, identity, and acceptance – within their peers groups and sub-groups - as they found their way at secondary school. Indeed, as early as Y7 there was evidence that PE was a site for the construction and display of hegemonic masculinities among many of the lads at ACS (Braham, 2003; Epstein et al., 2001; Fitzclarence & Hickey, 2001) as found in similar studies, as well as a place where forms of hegemonic masculinity linked to strength, aggression, heterosexuality and cool toughness (Braham, 2003; Connell, 1990; Light & Kirk, 2000; Parker, 1996; Pringle, 2008; Swain, 2000) enabled the most dominant Y7 pupils to gain status and power (Bramham, 2003; Connell, 2008; Mac an Ghail, 1994; Parker, 1996; Pringle, 2008). Y7 lesson observations consistently highlighted the fact that the physical arena of PE at ACS provided the opportunity for many lads to achieve status and dominance that enabled them to build on existing reputations and social positions consistently being built around school. As a consequence, some of the most 'prominent' lads (future Problematics) consistently engaged in often aggressive, masculine, disruptive, and 'alternative' behaviours synonymous with other studies of working-class lads (Archer

et al., 2007; Nolan, 2011) that contrasted with the less masculine act of listening and conforming in lessons. This was part of an obvious attempt to gain and maintain influence, authority, and status among their peers as highlighted by previous studies (Connell, 2008; Swain, 2010). It was also evident that the remainder of lads in these classes engaged in low-level disruptive behaviour (to varying degrees) in order to fit in and conform with the dominant behaviour of the Problematics as previously found (Connell, 2008; Frosh et al., 2002; Smith, 2007; Swain, 2010), in order to not be singled out for social reprisal during what has shown to be a socially important part of the lads 'growing up'. As the most prominent Y7 lads used their behaviours to assert dominance over their peers, therefore, the rest of the lads often engaged in similar behaviours for fear of reprisal. Ultimately, lessons became complex social battles for status and acceptance where very few lads were able, or willing, to engage in the 'feminine' act of listening, conforming, and 'regular' learning which led to PE staff delivering active lessons across a relatively broad range of activities, in order to minimize disruption in lessons. As a consequence, it was the behaviour of the lads during PE lessons that led to game-related lessons being a near-constant feature of KS3 PE at ACS which subsequently did little to address the narrow range of ability, knowledge, skill and sporting repertoires that the lads from Ayrefield had arrived at secondary school with.

In the longer term, this response by teachers had extended to a heavily football-dominated curriculum in a further attempt to give the lads what they wanted in a manner of their choosing (games and matches over drills). As a result, despite a broader adherence to the demands and expectations of the formal PE curriculum, the PE staff had amended aspects of the design and delivery of PE in order to address and respond to the on-going demands of their pupils.

Overall then, there was evidence within the study to support related claims that PE in many schools is highly susceptible to a degree – in this case, a high degree - of slippage

(Curtner-Smith, 1999) in the sense that the NCPE was structured and delivered in accordance with the constraints perceived by PE staff rather than for the good of the pupils. When the outcome of these actions of both pupils and staff are viewed in longer term it was also evident that this lack of structure and progression in the majority of lessons during KS3 had come to limit the ability and/or likelihood of the lads from all groups successfully engaging in a wide range of activities with any confidence or conviction during KS4. Put simply, a lack of focus on the promotion of ability, knowledge, and skills in many activities other than football in their early years at ACS meant that none of the lads were in a position to build on their KS3 PE experiences as they moved in to Y10 and 11.

Self-fulfilling prophecy/Pygmalion effect

In relation to these issues regarding the influence of the PE teachers on the experiences and development of pupil at ACS, there was a strong sense that the expectations of their pupils' ability was a determining factor in the actual abilities of the pupils (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968) via the process of self-fulfilling prophecy (Merton, 1957). Although it has already been stated that there was no evidence that the PE staff at ACS dismissed the abilities of their male pupils outright, it was evident that they had come to accept that the lads would behave in a particular way, show a strong preference for a limited range of activities linked to their leisure profiles (football), and dismiss activities deemed 'not for the likes of them' such as gymnastics and dance. Therefore, along with previous research (Good & Brophy, 1978) there was evidence that because the teachers expected these tendencies and preferences from lads living in Ayrefield, the PE staff behaved differently towards them than they may have done in a different (more middle-class) school. Not only did this lead to changes being made to the curriculum to reflect this (no gymnastics or dance), but the behaviour of the teachers towards lads at ACS led to changes in their self-concept and aspiration that meant that they were much more likely to pursue 'more of the same' in their PE lessons. As the PE staff increasingly believed that lads from Ayrefield did

not, could not, or would not, play particular sports, this subsequently impacted on the opportunities that lads were presented with. This then also came to impact on the way in which the teachers viewed and delivered these activities (cricket, tennis, athletics) and ultimately, therefore, the actions and attitudes of the lads in these lessons.

As an extension to this, comments from the PE staff regarding the initial splits between the lads as early as Y7 indicate that a Pygmalion effect may well be generating and then accentuating the splits between these lads that were so very much apparent in KS4. In the first instance, it was apparent that contrary to the findings of Martinek et al (1982) there was a degree of admission on the part of the PE staff at ACS that they had a tendency to treat lads in differing ways as early as Y7 based on the lads demeanour and attitude in PE lessons. In addition, in much the same way as described in previous research, the attitude towards some pupils and the impressions and expectations imposed on them from PE staff (Martinek et al., 1998) led to a degree of self-fulfilment (Good & Brophy, 1978) with regards to the pupils themselves. More specifically, as the teachers came to expect certain behaviours from particular students, these expectations caused the teachers to behave differently to these students. This process has been shown to lead to changes in the students' self-concept, motivation, and aspiration as well as a subsequent impact on achievement and behaviour (Good & Brophy, 1978; Martinek et al., 1982). As the impact of this became more consistent and prominent as the lads progressed towards KS4 and into their respective leaders groups, observations in Y10 and Y11 lessons supported previous claims (Good & Brophy, 1978; Martinek et al., 1982; Rosenthal, 1974; Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968) that the students' behaviour and achievement in the three lads groups came to match what was expected of them. It was evident from the findings then that expectations on the three lads groups differed starkly in the way that lessons were planned and delivered, as well as the way in which staff and lads interacted with one another. This is not only linked to previous studies regarding teaching climate/input

(McLean, 1974; Rosenthal, 1974) and feedback (Lanzetta & Hannah, 1969) but also the sense of expectation from both PE staff and the lads themselves regarding what they could, and would, do in PE.

Broader PE teacher influences

In addition to the points highlighted thus far, there was also evidence that even if the PE teachers had wanted to increase and improve the sporting repertoires and abilities of the lads at ACS during all years, the teachers' competencies, confidences, and beliefs (often by their own admission) was limiting the likelihood of this occurring. Indeed, the demands of the majority of the lads at ACS linked to the favouring of traditional team sports (and football in particular), matched the interests, experiences, and skills of the teachers. As a consequence, it was very much evident that in many cases the lads were often 'pushing at an open door' in PE. The PE staff at ACS had, as with the findings of other studies, evidently pursued a career in PE as a result of the perceived opportunity that the job provided them to maintain their interest and involvement in sport (Dodds et al., 1991; Matanim & Collier, 2003; O'Bryant et al., 2000; O'Sullivan et al., 2009; Zounhia et al., 2006). This also extended to the favoring of activities that held a degree of competence and confidence towards teaching, namely 'traditional' team sports such as football (Capel & Katene, 2000; Wong & Louie, 2002). It also appeared significant that the teachers themselves had all come from 'traditional' working-class backgrounds which had led them to develop quite narrow sporting repertoires and interests as a result of their own family and school experiences. This supported previous findings that much of what PE teachers know and do is influenced by their own time at school and broader life experiences (Green, 2002, 2003; O'Sullivan, 2005; Pajares, 1992; Placek et al., 1995). Therefore, the backgrounds of the PE staff and their skill sets and beliefs meant that there was often very little conviction or ability on the part of the PE teachers to confidently and competently teach structured lessons across a wide of activities in order to address the ability deficits

of the lads at ACS. There was also further evidence that the actions of the PE staff in this sense did not match the beliefs that were articulated during guided conversations and focus groups. Although PE staff did hold views that PE (among other things) should offer pupils a broad experience of activities as part of structured, skill-based lessons with a view to long-term participation, it was clear that the actions differed, often starkly. In doing so, this supported findings related to the conflict between actions and beliefs held by many PE teachers (Kulinna, Silverman & Keating, 2000; Romar, 1995).

Finally, as has been found to be the case previously (Graber, 2001; Griffin & Combs, 2000; O'Sullivan, 2005; Placek et al., 1995; Stroot & Whipple, 1996), there was also evidence that the current beliefs and values held by the PE teachers at ACS had emerged as a direct result of their own experiences, and these had subsequently proved very difficult to change. There was also evidence in the focus group responses from PE staff that the type of school that ACS was had stood to influence their actions, as found by Lawson (1988). The fact that the PE staff were able and willing to teach activities that were more suited to their own interests and abilities supported previous claims that many PE teachers favour the playing and teaching of traditional team games as a result of their own sporting and PE experiences (Green, 2003) combined with the 'demands' of the pupils with whom they work (Lawson, 1988) - leading to the teachers favouring a narrow range of game-based lessons (Green, 2003).

In relation to the Problematics, it was clear that by allowing them to participate in full-scale, competitive football matches that often involved swearing, lack of PE kit, and overt aggression, the PE staff were relatively successful in managing the constraints imposed on them by the strong and clear demands of these lads. For the Participants, the teachers were able to extend and 'teach' additional activities that they had experience, interest, and subject knowledge in (such as table tennis and basketball) and, therefore, often deliver 'good' lessons with relatively positive learning outcomes. However, these sports matched

what the PE teachers had played/enjoyed in the past and it enabled them to at least be seen to offer a broad range of activities and justify their ability to teach. In relation to the Performers, it was clear that the staff were largely responding to the pressures imposed on them by the educational system in order to try to boost school results as well as those in the department. As a result, the findings support previous evidence that teachers (PE in this case) are becoming increasingly pressurised, accountable, and scrutinised (Ball et al., 2012; Leat, 2014; Leat et al 2012) which had led the PE staff to favour 'the competitive interests of the school...rather than individual students' needs or well-being' (Ball et al., 2012: 528). It was also the case that the PE staff had felt the need to conform to school performance expectations by 'teaching to the test' (Alexander et al. 2009), or in this case the formal practical assessment involved in GCSE and AS level study. In this sense, the nature and content of the Performers' PE GCSE and AS level lessons that involved a range of non-football activities, were evidence that the teachers were matching actions found in similar studies in that teaching environments were highly hierarchical as the pupil is subservient (Leat et al., 2012; Nystrand et al., 1997) with the pupils generally being asked to learn and repeat actions, skills, and knowledge (Leat et al., 2012) in practical assessments in order to optimise the chances of gaining the best possible grade.

Physical Education at ACS

When viewed more broadly, it was evident that the working-class lads at ACS were very much dependent on their school PE/sport experiences as means of developing an understanding of their body and developing their abilities/sporting repertoires, as has been suggested to be the case among many working-class pupils (Dagkas & Stathi, 2007). Indeed, it was clear that the narrow range of recreational activities that made up the lads' leisure profiles and their minimal involvement in structured/competitive sporting activity outside of school meant that the subject of PE had the very real potential to imbue the lads

with the range and types of abilities, knowledge, and attitudes that could impact positively on current and lifelong participation (Evans & Bairner, 2013).

However, there was very little evidence in the findings to support claims that PE at ACS had the ability to broaden skills, knowledge, and sporting repertoires (Bailey, 2006; Bailey & Dismore, 2004; Talbot, 2001) or raise physical activity levels (Trudeau & Shepard, 2005). In fact, evidence from the study supported previous findings that PE failed to have any (let alone a significant) role to play in developing the ability and desire of lads from all three groups to participate in a greater range and amount of sports and PA outside of school (Evans & Davies, 2010; Gard, 2012; Green, 2012, 2014; Kirk, 2002).

In relation to the working-class backgrounds of the lads at ACS, it was also evident that the past and current PE experiences of KS4 lads at ACS in particular supported claims that PE in many working-class schools 'flatters to deceive' (Evans & Davies, 2008: 201) in addressing the stubborn differences in participation rates that exist between different social class groups (Evans & Davies, 2010). At ACS, this was due to the failure of PE to have the desired effect of 'altering social patterns and inequalities and the predispositions for sport amongst individuals' (Evans & Davies, 2010: 768-69).

Perhaps more alarming, however, were the findings in the study that supported previous suggestions that PE at ACS was less than effective in promoting participation across a wide range of sports and activities (Dagkas & Stathi, 2007; Kirk, 2005). Indeed, PE at the school was actually perpetuating the existing social differences (Dagkas, 2011; Wright & O'Flynn, 2007) by providing the lads with the types of PE 'diet' and lesson delivery that more often than not stood to reinforce existing unequal quantities and qualities of ability (Shilling, 2004). This then limited the likelihood of them developing the types and levels of ability conducive to participation across a wider range of activities, in both short and long term.

The structure of the research design and the findings that emerged from within the study very much supported suggestions that the PE experiences of the lads at ACS could not be viewed in isolation (Ball, 2009) and that only viewing the school experiences, behaviours, and attitudes of lads was the wrong place to look, especially if 'viewed in isolation to other parts of society' (Ball, 2009: 2). It was evident that PE (particularly in the case of ACS) cannot countervail against wider social processes (Dagkas & Stathi, 2007; Green et al., 2005; Kirk, 2005).

In the case of PE teacher influence on this apparent 'failure' of PE at ACS, the PE staff were always going to be 'fighting a losing battle' to address inequalities in skills and participation due to the patterns of physical development that had seemingly been set before the start of the lads formal education (Birchwood et al., 2008; Evans & Davies, 2010). Therefore, the findings in the study could support claims that PE teachers are not solely to blame for the persistence of inequalities outside schools, or should be the subjects of our ire' (Evans & Davies, 2010: 768-770). However, it was evident that the curriculum design, the delivery/structure of most PE lessons, and the abilities, skills and knowledge of the lads at ACS, supported a range of claims that a much stronger focus on skill/ability development needed to emerge if the lads at ACS were ever to develop the skill and desire to engage in a wider range of activities both inside and outside of school (Evans & Davies, 2008, 2010). There was little evidence in the study to suggest that any move away from a focus on the (physical) 'educational needs' (Evans & Davies, 2008: 206) of the lads at ACS was due to a move away from developing ability in PE (Evans & Davies, 2008). It was evident though, that the PE teachers' actions, attitudes and approaches to PE (which did often differ between lads groups) were being altered and conditioned by a range of changes and influences (Evans & Davies, 2008) that impacted on their day to day working lives. These influences pertained more to the behaviour and demands of the lads at ACS regarding what they would do and how they would do it, as well as the constraining

influence of a performance-related education culture that meant that 'getting the grades' in the short term was more important than physical educating the pupils for the long-term benefits this may well provide (especially with the Performers). That is to say, despite the seemingly constraining influence of the PE staff at ACS on the sporting abilities and repertoires of lads at ACS, it was evident that the wide influences that came to impact on the lads' attitudes, beliefs and actions regarding PE, PA and sport and the ever-increasing 'pupil power' in modern education was actually more of an influence of what the lads, did or would do in PE. In short, the lads at ACS created and influenced their own PE experiences and it was *them* that had the most significant impact on their sporting repertoires, abilities, skills and knowledge, and their life long participation in sport, leisure, recreation and physical activity.

Ultimately, therefore, the findings in the study supported claims that more targeted solutions (both in and outside schools) that place pupils in context with their social backgrounds and consider them in their social worlds need to be considered if issues and concerns regarding the nature and effectiveness of PE are ever to be addressed (Evans & Davies, 2008).

Making sociological sense of the findings

The primary aim of the second part of this discussion is to consider and explain the main findings of the study from a sociological perspective. From a very early stage it proved extremely difficult to separate the work of Pierre Bourdieu and Norbert Elias. Notwithstanding the shared intellectual heritage and sympathy that exists between the two (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992; Dunning & Hughes, 2012) a decision (contentious as it may be) was made to utilise the work of both sociologists in order to make sociological sense of the findings. Initially it was evident that any academic work closely linked to social class would inevitably lend itself closely to Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, capital, distinction, and taste, especially in relation to how the lads came to develop particular tastes, values

and attitudes. By extension, the concepts of social field and doxa also lent themselves towards a more in-depth sociological explanation of the 'school effect' and the impact of the Leaders groups on the lads' school and PE experiences. However, it was also felt that key Eliasian concepts could contribute an almost equal amount to the sociological examination and explanation of the findings. The lads existing as 'human beings among other human beings' (Elias, 1978: 13), the changing nature of social figurations/relationships, and the Elias's game model were all deemed useful and relevant in explaining the different relationships in which the lads were involved and the varying outcomes that emerged during their time at school. In addition, the concepts of functional democratisation and changing power relations also emerged as key to explaining the extent to which the lads were able to negotiate what they received in the name of PE at ACS. Ultimately, therefore, despite the resulting constraints on words, the decision was made to use the work of both sociologists as it was felt that to not adopt this approach would be to the detriment of the discussion and the thesis more generally.

Norbert Elias and Figural Sociology

The importance of considering the lads at ACS as existing as part of a wider figuration was *the* over-arching, and perhaps most significant, issue to be considered when attempting to make sociological sense of the findings. However, it was important to acknowledge that the lads at ACS were not only dependent on the people/relationships that form the figurations in their everyday lives (parents), but that these figurations also related closely to the ways in which the lads came to experience the (their) school environment. In this regard, it was evident from the findings that the lads across all three groups had been exposed to similar upbringings in and around the working-class community of Ayrefield that led to them adopting a similar habitus synonymous with being a young male brought up in a working-class community. However, when their time at school was examined in greater detail, it was also evident that the different interdependent relationships that existed within

their peer/leaders groups had led to their school-based habitus temporarily, but significantly, changing as a result of the various constraining and enabling influences linked to their figurations while at school. Therefore, a 'school effect' was very much at work at ACS that, despite commonalities in their background, was causing male pupils from the three different lads groups to behave in rather differing ways at while at school due to the range of different relationships and pressures to which they were exposed in that specific environment. These relationships and outcomes related to the three groups of lads will be addressed in more detail following an examination of the commonalties that existed among the vast majority of lads at Ayrefield and the subsequent impact that this had on certain aspects of their lives, actions, and attitudes.

Emergence of a working-class habitus

Despite some relative differences that appeared to exist regarding where the lads lived in Ayrefield and the occupations/employment status of their parents, data on the area and information collected during the study strongly suggested that lads at ACS were almost exclusively working-class (to varying degrees). As a result of this, the lads' interdependence with the structure of their society and the figurations that existed within it (Elias, 1978), combined with the long-term, non face-to-face relationships (Smith & Green, 2005) that existed within the local community, had meant that lads at ACS had been consistently exposed to very similar socialising influences (Elias, 1978). Therefore, it was evident from the findings that this long-term interweaving with very similar individuals and groups of people had led the lads at ACS to demonstrate autonomous functional interconnections which meant that they had adopted similar values and behaviours synonymous with many aspects of their lives (Dunning, 1999; Elias, 1978). Elements of their habitus - termed a person's embodied social learning that emerges as a result of the social relationships of which they are a part and leads to their 'automatic blindly functioning

apparatus of self-control' (Elias, 2000: 368) – had led the lads from Ayrefield to develop a social habitus that they shared with others who had been habituated through similar experiences (Dunning, 2002; Dunning & Hughes, 2012; Elias, 2000; Goudsblom & Mennell, 1998; Murphy et al., 2000). It is important to highlight that some individual preferences and differing behaviours were apparent in some aspects of their lives (such as those related to school between Problematics and Performers). However, the relationships to which the lads had been involved outside of school had evidently caused these lads to take on a shared personality that had grown 'out of the common language' which the lads had 'shared with others' (Elias, 1987: 182) as a result of growing up in and around Ayrefield.

Perhaps the starkest and most consistent example of this was the way in which the lads at ACS spent their leisure time. It was particularly evident that the lads' leisure/sports choices been strongly influenced by what they were expected to do and play as young working-class males (Miles, 2000; Miles et al., 1998). The manner in which they took part (recreational, away from parents, among friends) was also closely linked to the habitus that had emerged as a result of being brought up in a more 'traditional' working-class community (Dunning et al., 1988). Therefore, the common habitus that had formed among the lads from Ayrefield had led to their type and level of participation being very closely linked to a narrow range of socially acceptable activities that had emerged as an unintended outcome of their interdependent relationships with friends, peers, family and wider community (Miles et al., 1998; Miles, 2000, 2003; Roberts 1997, 1999, 2014). Namely in this instance, leisure profiles were dominated by recreational football, fishing and 'hanging out' with friends.

As a result, the lads' responses in interviews and lesson observations clearly demonstrated that their interest, ability, and knowledge was restricted, and it was this sporting habitus formed outside of the school environment that proved to be such a

significantly constraining factor on the ways that lads from all three groups (to differing extents) were both able and willing to engage positively in PE. Several lads had previously been involved in competitive sports outside of school, while some others had even taken part in some activities recreationally with male members of their family. However, a major constraining factor on the ability and willingness of lads at ACS to positively engage in a wide PE curriculum was the particular habitus that the lads had adopted regarding what they did in their spare time. Although seemingly relatively active in their leisure time, the types of relationships that they were engaged in with family and friends outside of school meant that almost all lads at ACS were constrained not only in what they *could* do, but in most cases what they *would* do.

It was also clear that all lads (to greater and lesser degrees) were constrained by the wider expectations imposed on them regarding the conflict between engaging with education, and the more 'traditional' expectations associated with being a 'proper' working-class male. Therefore, the intense 'we' bonds related to specific working-class values and expectations more typical of groups further down the social scale (Elias, 1978) had led the lads at ACS to be acutely aware of the conflict between educational engagement and success, and working-class values. Despite this degree of commonality regarding how the majority of lads chose to spend their leisure time and the awareness of the conflict between the values and expectations linked to school/education it has been made clear in the findings that lads groups at ACS came to experience school and PE in quite different ways. It is to a more specific examination of the reasons behind these splits that this chapter will now turn.

The emergence of lads groups at ACS

Despite the similar habitus that existed among the lads at ACS as a result of their similar figurations and long-term relationships, the findings highlighted a split between these lads that became accentuated as they progressed through school. In the first instance, for Elias, these emerging differences would relate to the fact that any social bonds need to be considered as part of a perpetual 'growing up' in all areas of the lads' lives (Elias, 1978: 68). In this regard then, changes to the range and type of their social relationships during their time at school should be expected in relation to the dynamic and fluid nature (Elias, 1978; Goodwin & O'Connor, 2006; Murphy et al., 2000) of all social relationships. However, it was the nature of these interdependent relationships and the manner of these changes during their time at ACS that had seemingly led to the differing attitudes, experiences, and outcomes that caused the split between the three groups of lads in KS4 at ACS.

As the lads were drawn together during Y7, formed friendship groups through KS3, and then became increasingly isolated groups in KS4, the lads from the three different groups became influenced in differing ways, by differing people, and to differing extents while at school. From a figural perspective, this meant the independent relationships that they formed with others varied (often significantly) for lads between the groups, and the school-based figuration of which they were a part, became increasingly longer and more complex over time (Elias, 1978; Goudsblom & Mennell, 1998). As a consequence of this, as the figurations involving the lads did involve greater numbers of people and groups, the outcomes of these interdependent relationships became 'much more opaque' and therefore difficult to control (Elias, 1978: 68). Put simply, as the lads' school lives took on different pathways as their identities and expectations developed and evolved in KS4, they became influenced to varying degrees by their working-class habitus and their interdependent relationships with friends, teachers, peers and even those to whom they were not directly in contact (school governors, education/work providers). This subsequently led to attitudes and behaviours that no one had considered or expected

(Elias, 1978; van Krieken, 1998) as the nature, structure, and complexity of the lads' respective school lives changed (Elias, 1994, 2000). Ultimately, it was evident that the lads gradually formed a distinct, and often quite different, school-based habitus as part of a 'school-effect'. Although this did not appear to impact on their lives outside of school it did impact greatly on their actions within it.

If we accept along with Elias (and for that matter, Bourdieu) that a person's habitus is dynamic and fluid in nature (Murphy et al., 2000) and never ceases to be entirely affected by 'changing relations with others' (Elias, 1987: 455), it is perhaps unsurprising that the different 'surrounding social relations' (van Krieken, 1998: 60) and 'compelling forces' (Mennell & Goudsblom, 1998: 118) seemed to cause the 'natural' behaviour of the lads to develop and change (Murphy et al., 2000) whilst at school. From a figurational perspective, it was evident that the school's imposition of 'Leaders' groups had the unintended, but seemingly positive, consequence of limiting the potential impact of their wider configurations – as if, in Eliasian terms, the bonds linking them to their immediate peers and teachers were strengthened, while their links to the Problematics were diminished.

An important feature of these differing social relationships and subsequent intended and unintended outcomes was the power relationships that existed among and between the lads, teachers, PE teachers, and members of their wider community. It has already been stated that all lads were constrained to varying degrees by their working-class habitus and the relationships that they had with members of their broader lives. However, it was evident that the relative power of the lads within their 'education based' interdependent relationships was an important issue to consider when examining the ways that lads came to experience school and negotiate their PE lessons.

Problematic lads in education

In relation to the relative power of the Problematic lads, it was evident that this group were much less constrained by the more 'formal' relationships at school. This not only meant that they were less constrained by the need to succeed academically (compared to the Performers especially) but, as a consequence, they were less likely to engage in the positive and conforming actions required at school. Indeed, the most constraining influence of the Problematic lads' behaviour was their strong interdependent relationship with their friendship and immediate peer group that caused those involved in this particular social figuration to engage in actions and behaviours more expected of young working-class males at school. Overall, therefore, the Problematics were part of a particular social group that, although not isolated from their interdependent relationships with teachers and 'education figures' and the constraining influence of the need to stay in school to go to college, had formed a school-based habitus that was more strongly influenced by a more 'traditional' working-class habitus. As a consequence, they valued and engaged in non-academic actions such as aggressive/intimidatory behaviour, smoking and vocational qualifications at college and subsequently possessed significant degrees of power over both their peers, and in many cases, their teachers. Therefore, the Problematics were relatively 'free' to consistently display difficult and often highly disruptive behaviours (as long as they did not go too far and get excluded) due to the less complex chains of interdependence that they were engaged in at school. This then allowed them to generate the forms and degrees of power that enabled them to constrain the actions of teachers (by refusing to behave or work in lessons) and other lads (by intimation and physical violence) – a process and outcome that only became more prominent and significant as the lads progressed towards the end of their time at ACS.

An unforeseen outcome of this power and status around school generally, however, was the fact that the Problematic lads came to value their identity and position greatly. Consequently, they not only strove to protect it, but also (when the situation allowed) made

attempts to enhance it. Therefore, PE at school provided the ideal opportunity for the Problematics to utilize their power over both peers and teachers to get the types of PE lessons that suited their school-based masculine habitus whilst also providing them with the opportunity to enhance their power over their peers and friends. The very nature of competitive, large-scale football matches in PE, therefore, enabled the Problematic lads to demonstrate the actions (physical) and attitudes (competitive, ruthless) that suited their school-based masculine habitus and stood to enhance their power and reputations around school. In contrast, activities and types of lessons that stood to threaten or compromise this were strongly avoided and the power over staff that existed as a result of past behavior was regularly utilized in order to avoid such experiences. In doing this, the Problematics consistently utilized the outcomes related to the process of functional democratization to their advantage. This was done by consistently threatening and even demonstrating disruptive and aggressive behaviour to get what they wanted, in the manner they demanded, while safe in the knowledge that the PE teachers were able to do very little about it, save relent to their strong preferences.

However, Elias (1978) is keen to stress that any balance or ratio of power should not be seen as a one-way process but instead as a reciprocal relationship (Elias, 1978, 2001) where the seemingly less powerful are able, by degrees, to constrain the actions of the more powerful (Elias, 1983). Therefore, it is important to highlight the fact that the PE staff at ACS were still able to constrain aspects of the Problematic lads' actions in order to minimize the negative impact on themselves. As PE staff were aware of the Problematics desire to play football, the teachers' actions in the changing rooms and ahead of lesson decreased time during which they were required to keep the lads on task. The PE teachers at ACS, were also well aware of the fact that the Problematics were determined to 'negotiate' competitive football in all of their PE lessons. This meant that the PE staff could wrestle back much of the power as it was they who dictated when the lessons began.

The PE staff also accepted, and become resigned to the fact that the 'worst' Problematic lads held more power than others over the rest of the group and even the PE teachers themselves. This meant that the PE staff conceded power to these lads, in the expectation that that they would utilise this power over the rest of the group in order to assert a degree of control. Put simply, the PE staff seemed happy to concede any form of control over the 'worst of the worst' by relaxing most attempts to control their actions in lessons. This was done in the hope that such a positive relationship between the most prominent Problematic lads and the PE teachers would lead to these lads minimising swearing, controlling overly aggressive behaviour, and perhaps most importantly ensuring participation through the lesson on their behalf. Findings confirmed that this approach was generally very successful as threats or forms of 'encouragement' from the 'top lads' in Problematic PE lessons were much more effective than those that came from staff.

Finally, despite the potential conflict that may well have occurred between the Problematic lads and the PE staff at ACS, the lessons generally took place in a positive atmosphere, not least because in football dominated KS4 PE lessons both had formed a group of mutually orientated dependent people (Elias, 2000). The large-scale, competitive games of football suited the Problematics as it provided them with an ideal environment to display behaviours that matched their habitus and assert their power over others. The staff meanwhile were able to manage the constraints imposed on them by the threat/behaviour of the Problematics by providing active, engaging, and highly-suitable PE lessons that meant that disruption and confrontation were all but removed.

Overall, therefore, the Problematics were much less constrained by any 'school-effect' due to their relative power over PE staff and peers as well as the lack of pressure from examinable PE. By extension these lads also saw the playing of large-scale, competitive football matches in PE as a way of 'wrestling back' some power from staff and the school environment that stood in stark contrast to their wider habitus that valued masculinity and

aggression. Despite the apparent ability of the PE staff at ACS to impose an element of constraint on the actions of the Problematics, these lads ultimately used their own power within the school-based figuration and the lack of constraints that a need to play a range of activities in GCSE PE would have generated. This was done in order to ensure that what they got in the name of PE at ACS (in KS4 especially) matched the expectations of what it was to be a working-class male, as well as the types of activity that they enjoyed doing outside of the school environment.

The Performers and Participants in education

In any examination of the ways that the Performers and Participants came to act and achieve at ACS, there must always be an acknowledgement of the working-class habitus that had formed among them due to their similar backgrounds. However, data collection indicated that both the Performers and the Participants were less constrained by the strong independent relationships with friends, peers, and even family members towards consistently displaying overtly masculine, disruptive, and non-conformist behaviours as part of a school-based habitus. The opportunity to further isolate themselves from the constraining influence of the Problematics and the resulting pressures to act like a 'proper' lad within their respective Leaders groups also meant that the school based figuration of which they were a part was less opaque and, therefore, more easy to control (Elias, 1978).

As an outcome of this change and isolation, these lads were more able to act in a manner that matched the expectations of the teachers/school and optimized their chances of relative success at school. Both the Participants and Performers became part of groups of mutually orientated people (Elias, 2000) where everyone was 'pulling in the same direction' for academic success (e.g. peers and teachers). This meant that they were largely involved with classmates, peers, and teachers who were 'just like them' in that they appreciated and supported hard work and positive behaviour at school (for the most part).

Therefore, it was also evident that these mutually orientated groups had led to a very distinct school-based habitus emerging for the Performers and Participants which could be related to Elias' suggestion that a person's habitus never ceases entirely to be affected by the changes in their life (Elias, 1994).

Performer lads in education and PE

For the Performer group it was evident that despite the lack of constraint imposed by the presence and expectations of the Problematics, these lads were involved in a highly complex school figuration that compelled them to act in manner not usually expected of working-class males such as them. In this regard, the interdependent relationships that they had formed with teachers, senior leaders, peers, parents, and friends meant that this group were constrained towards engaging in actions that enabled them to achieve academic goals set *for* them as well as *by* them by expectant others. The Performer lads were content in surrendering any power to their teachers that they may have held in order to maintain the mutually orientated relationship that would lead to a positive outcome for both parties. The fact that the Performers had positive relationships with their teachers (and vice versa) meant that the lads were more able to achieve the grades that they aimed for while the teachers were increasingly able to gain the grades for their groups that school targets dictated.

That is not to say, however, that the Performers were not very much aware of the fact that this 'brainy' tag needed to be considered in relation to the range of 'other people occupying other positions in the web of relationship' (Elias, 1978: 124). Whilst the Performers were keen to embrace their 'academic' label around school in order to express a particular form of individuality and independence (Miles, 2000; 2003) they appeared to be well aware that they could not ignore the complex network of interdependent relationships of which they were a part. Ultimately, therefore, the Performers seemed very

conscious (and able) to walk the line between academic engagement and success whilst also avoiding being totally ostracised among their peer group. This appeared due, in no small part, to being good at, or at least willing, to play football inside as well as outside of school.

It is important to highlight the fact that the differing approaches and levels of engagement of the Performers at school did not seem like a long-term, deep-seated amendment to their general habitus. Instead, these types of behaviours at school demonstrated by the Performers were more of a pragmatic development towards an effective school-based habitus. In this regard, although what they did at school, and how they perceived education and qualifications during KS4 was starkly different to the Problematics, it was evident that the Performers were constrained in their broader educational development by their social background. As a result, the Performers were not only clearly tied to 'yesterday's social reality' (van Krieken, 1998: 61) but had also adopted a short-term 'means to an end' approach to 'getting through exams' so that they could achieve their goal of attaining a 'good' job.

When the outcomes and actions of the Performers are related to the KS4 PE experiences of the lads at ACS, therefore, it was evident that the Performers were similarly happy to yield much of their power in relation to their interdependent relationships (Elias, 1978; Mennell & Goudsblom, 1998) with PE staff. As with their general teachers around school, this was done in the expectation that such an approach would provide them with a valid means of successfully completing their qualifications. In a similar manner to that of the PE staff and Problematic pupils, therefore, it was apparent that the GCSE and AS level groups had become groups of mutually orientated and dependent group (Elias, 2000) who were happy and focused on working together in order to achieve the mutually beneficial goal of academic success. The KS4 Performer PE groups had become aligned with the aims and requirements of their PE teachers so that they were all pulling in the same

direction towards a common goal and this negated the need for any level of negotiation regarding the content of their KS4 PE lessons. The playing of football in PE would have led to negative implications for both staff and the Performers and so it was never a realistic option in PE lessons. In this regard, the Performers had come to engage in their PE qualifications and education in much the same way as they did their classroom lessons in that they were pragmatic and willing to do what was required of them in order to match the requirements of the syllabus and maximise their chances of academic success.

Ultimately, therefore, the changes to the Performers' habitus occurred only in the short-term in response to the constraining influences of academic pressures and expectations of examinable PE. In relation to PE lessons specifically, the Performers were heavily constrained towards acting in a way that differed from their socially constructed norm by playing a range of additional sports in order that they could fulfil the requirements imposed on them by staff and the exam syllabus. In this regard, there was a strong sense that their interdependent relationships with school staff (and to some extent one another) had led to strong 'school-effect' that significantly, but only temporarily, altered the habitus of this group of lads. In the longer-term, and in relation to the wider figuration of which they were apart, the reality was that the 'deeper' habitus that existed as part of their longer-term exposure to their family and wider community was still significant. This meant that even the Performer lads continued to participate in a very narrow-range of activities that would almost certainly have a constraining influence on the sport repertoires and lifelong participation.

Participants in education and PE

The Participants were the group of lads at ACS who were less limited in their actions than any of the two other groups. They were not directly constrained by a working-class expectation of being a 'real' working-class lad as were the Problematics. Neither were they

constrained by the level of pressure and expectation imposed on them by a wide range of individuals and groups as they moved towards their final examinations (Performers). The figurations of which they were a part, were comparatively less complex and, therefore, much easier to control. This was not only due to the isolation that they enjoyed as part of their Leaders group, but also as a result of the degree of acceptance at the lack of power that they possessed within the school-based figuration.

In relation to this, all interdependent groups (including themselves) were aware that the Participants possessed no obvious socially valuable skills or abilities in the form of sporting prowess and 'physical' prowess – namely, fighting. As a result, evidence suggested that the Participants were arguably the most content with the school's academic banding system. This was due to the fact that they were able (and content) to indulge in the types of behaviours that may well have led to reprisals and mimicry from peers (e.g. role-play gaming and over-conformity in lessons). Ultimately, therefore, their lack of power and status within the school-based figuration actually enabled them to 'successfully' get in, get through, and get out of school.

In PE, the Participant lads viewed and approached the subject in much the same way as their general classroom-based lessons in that they largely accepted their relative lack of power in their interdependent relationship with other lads and PE staff. This meant that these lads consistently took part in activities/lessons in PE that would not be deemed their first choice. This was due to their inability to constrain the actions of the PE teachers and/or the more dominant Problematic lads with whom they shared their KS4 'options'. Interestingly, however, it was apparent that the Participants were also relatively content with this unintended outcome as these isolated PE lessons enabled them to manage the constraints imposed on them by the Problematic lads, which had clearly been a significant and negative feature of their KS3 PE experiences.

Ultimately, the Participants were unwilling and seemingly unable to negotiate what they received in the name of PE. This was not only due to their desire to avoid confrontation or reprimand from PE staff in lessons, but also as a result of their lack of status and power around school. When viewed in relation to their wider school-figuration, the Participants were part of a less complex social network in much the same way as that which they experienced in their other lessons at school. This meant that they were neither constrained in their actions towards demonstrating and reinforcing masculine actions and reputations in PE, nor bound by a need to fulfil the expectations and pressures imposed on them linked to completion of GCSE and AS level qualifications. Therefore, the PE teachers and the Participants became mutually orientated and interdependent in that indoor PE lessons enabled the Participants to enjoy the isolation of recreational sporting activities among friends whilst enabling the PE staff to deliver structured and largely effective PE lessons.

PE teachers

The actions and attitudes of PE staff in all schools cannot be considered without acknowledging the fact that they too are products of the interweaving with a range of people throughout both their personal and professional lives. Therefore, although PE teachers cannot be seen as a homogenous group, neither are they heterogeneous. As a result, consideration should always be made regarding the common, deep-rooted attachment and conviction to sport and its value/presence in PE (Green, 2002).

For the PE staff at ACS, this dominance of sport in their general habitus was particularly class-related as a result of being brought up in working-class families not far from Ayrefield. Therefore, it was apparent that their interests and participation had been (and remained) similar to that of the lads at ACS in that they demonstrated a very strong

preference for football and to a lesser extent basketball and table tennis. This was due to the fact that the strong social bonds that the PE staff at ACS had generated along with the commonality of their general habitus, meant that they had formed a strong group habitus as a result of their common interest and backgrounds. It was also the case that the group habitus that existed between the PE staff at ACS had been accentuated as a result of the constraints imposed on them regarding what the lads themselves would and/or could do. Consequently, their actions and beliefs as PE teachers at ACS not only bore hallmarks of their previous (working-class) PE/sporting practice, but these were being reproduced as a consequence of the specific school-based figuration of which they were a part. In this regard, it was also evident that the PE teachers had developed 'practical' teaching approaches that differed to their 'professional philosophies of PE' in order to manage the constraints imposed on them by the lads at ACS.

Inter-relationships between lads groups and PE staff at ACS

Because a person's habitus is susceptible to development and change as networks or relationships become increasingly complex and compelling, more specific outcomes need also to be considered in relation to the PE teachers and the three groups of lads. In the case of ACS, the multiplicity of dynamic (sometimes non face-to-face) social bonds involved in the school-based figuration led to a range of outcomes that could not be predicted or avoided. Therefore, because the PE teachers' relationships with different groups of lads emerged and evolved (especially towards the end of Y11) so did the outcomes regarding the range of different relationships that existed, such as those that existed between PE teachers and Participants compared to PE staff and the Problematics.

Despite these specific relationships, however, it was also important to consider that these existed within the broader school environment. Therefore, both staff and lads never ceased to be influenced by the broader social figuration that was the school environment. Elias' Game model, therefore, provided an ideal platform on which to consider the types of complex interdependent relationships that people formed with one another at ACS (Elias, 1978). It also provided a platform on which to consider the varying ways that the changing power relationships between interdependent people (Elias, 1978) came to 'influence, if not quite determine, the moves of another' (Green, 2000: 183) in ways that they would 'not act except under compulsion' (Elias (1978: 94). In relation to this, not only were the lads interdependent on, and with, one another, but they were also involved in a range of power relationships that influenced the actions all those involved in a variety of different ways (Dunning & Hughes, 2012, Elias, 1978).

The long-term influence on these interdependent relationships was closely linked to the class-related, narrow sporting repertoires that Y7 pupils arrived with at ACS that proved very difficult to change. In this regard, the process and outcome of 'the game' was consistently (and significantly) constrained by the broader habitus evident among the lads that had been formed during early childhood. However, it was also the varying interdependent relationships that existed at ACS that led to the varying outcomes related to how the three groups of lads experienced PE at ACS.

Perhaps the most significant influence on these outcomes was the constraining influence of the Problematic lads on what they had received in the name of PE. Starting in Y7, and seemingly existing throughout KS3, the actions of the more prominent lads had led the PE staff towards delivering game-based lessons as part of a football dominated curriculum. Although a broader KS3 curriculum now existed at ACS, observations found that lessons were still being delivered with little focus of skill development as a direct result

of the behaviour of the most prominent lads and the subsequent response of their peers towards matching this through low-level disruptive behaviour (e.g. not listening to PE staff). Therefore, such lessons lower down school constrained the ability of all lads at ACS to take part in lessons during KS4 that could have been designed to build on skills and knowledge gained in KS3. This meant that game dominated lessons in Y10 and Y11 were the only feasible option for most pupils or any lessons that did focus on skill-development were introducing rather than developing existing skills that should ideally have been learnt lower down school. However, the outcomes related to this broader influence did cause the three lads groups to respond in differing way leading to varied outcomes related to their KS4 PE lessons. From a figurational perspective, this is linked to the fact that all interdependent power relationships are subject to change over time (van Krieken, 1998) as they move 'to move to and fro' (Elias, 1978: 131). For the Participants in particular, they were happy to relinquish some of their power in relation to the Performers in order to enable them to act 'more freely' within their PE lessons. Instead of maintaining a clear interdependent relationship with the intimidating Problematics that constrained their actions, therefore, their decision to 'choose' non-football options limited the power of the Problematics to directly influence their actions. As a consequence, although they remained constrained more broadly by the Problematics, limiting the direct influence of them in PE enabled the Participants to manage the constraints imposed on them.

For the Problematics, this outcome further enhanced their power in the figuration and their school based-habitus, especially due to the fact that their potential and actual disruptive behaviour in PE lessons clearly constrained the actions of the PE staff towards giving them what they wanted. Subsequently, therefore, both the Problematics and the Participants were able to manage the interdependent relationships that existed between each other and the teachers in order to negotiate a largely positive outcome for themselves in PE. For the PE teachers, although they seemed (in theory at least) to be unhappy

professionally with this outcome, it was evident that by relinquishing much of their power to both groups of lads at KS4, they were also able to manage the constraints imposed on them. This not only meant that this increased participation and limited disruption for all lads in KS4 option-based PE, but the manner and content of these lessons closely matched the interests and competencies of the PE staff (i.e. games of basketball and football). Finally, the relative isolation of the Performers and the PE staff had to be viewed as a move specific and simplistic relationship. It has already been stated that the opportunity and ability of the Performers to 'hit the ground running' in most activities in GCSE and AS level PE had been constrained by their previous KS3 experiences and the sporting habitus with which the lads had arrived at ACS. However, the broader constraints relating to modern education and school targets more specifically had led the PE staff (and Alex in particular) to form a mutually beneficial relationship with the Performer groups in order to enable them to manage these constraints. This was evidently a short-term arrangement, however, in that it enabled staff and Performers to work towards a mutually beneficial, shared goal when just like lads from the two other groups, large-scale competitive games of football would have been the preferred option.

Making sociological sense of the findings

Pierre Bourdieu

A main finding within the study was the differences that emerged between the three groups of lads at ACS regarding the ways that they engaged with school/education and then came to experience PE. However, underlying all of these differences was the fact that they had all been exposed to the types of 'long, slow social processes' (Bourdieu, 1980: 83) that had led to them adopting very similar tastes, attitudes and actions. Therefore, these needed to be considered when attempting to explain both the similarities (leisure profiles) as well as the differences that existed (attitude to education) between the lads. The commonality that

existed in their working-class backgrounds, therefore, was used to explain both the similarities and differences that existed between the lads in the study.

Despite the fact that specific data was not collected on families' incomes and occupations, there was sufficient evidence throughout the study (via observations and interviews) to claim that all lads at ACS had been brought up in a working-class community as part of working-class families (to varying degrees). The first impact of this related closely to the capital portfolios held by parents/families, which came to influence key aspects of the lads' lives. Firstly, there was a clear sense from the findings that the economic capital held by the families/parents of the lads may well have prevented them from being able to afford and access the types of activities that may well have extended their sporting participation and repertoires. However, focus group responses in particular suggested that Bourdieu's concepts of social and cultural capital (1972, 1973, 1984) were also especially important in considering why lads living in Ayrefield were engaged in only a limited range of seemingly class-related activities during their leisure time. Comments linked to parental involvement in sport/leisure from focus groups clearly indicated that the lads at ACS were very rarely (if ever) exposed to the types of social relationships and ties that may have 'pulled' them towards involvement in a wider range of sports. In addition, it was also evident that the cultural capital of their families had led the lads at ACS to acquire particular skills, knowledge, values, and actions (Bourdieu, 1984; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1973; Roberts, 2001) as part of their early socialisation experiences (Kew, 1997 cited in Green, 2008). These had also evidently been transmitted down through generations of families (Gunn, 2005, Roberts, 2011) and led to them favouring participation in 'socially suitable' activities such as fishing, snooker, and football.

Closely linked to the influence of the capital portfolios of their parents was the habitus that the lads developed as a result of being brought up in the type of families/community that had exposed them to 'a patterned set of organizing forces and principles' (Bourdieu &

Wacquant, 1992: 97). Evidence relating to what the lads from all three groups did outside of school confirmed that this common habitus had subsequently led to them developing very similar attitudes, behaviours, and tastes (Quarmby & Dagkas, 2012; Stuij, 2013). What the lads did in their spare time, therefore, as well as who they did it with, and what they saw as acceptable, was closely linked to the fact that their tastes were 'conscious manifestations' of this habitus (Shilling 1993: 129). Regardless of the group to which they were assigned during the course of the study, lads at ACS were 'endowed with the habitus' (Bourdieu, 1993: 72) that had clearly emerged from long-term exposure to the very similar and deep-seated bodily dispositions, tastes, interests, and lifestyles of their parents/families/peers (Bourdieu, 1984, 1990; Crossley, 2012; Hay, 2011; Hay & MacDonald, 2010; Wacquant, 1998, 2006).

A distinction to make here in relation to the Eliasian concept of habitus is that the lads' working-class background and the way in which they had been socialized over a prolonged period of time had caused the lads to act in a particular way. In addition, the life-long social conditions to which the lads had been exposed (Bourdieu, 1984; Wacquant, 2006) had also led them to display more tangible influences of their habitus in the form of their actions, attitudes, and tastes, alongside their movements, language and inclinations (Bourdieu, 1984, 1990; Hay, 2011; Hay & MacDonald, 2010; Wacquant, 2006). For the lads at ACS, therefore, their cultural 'learning, refining, recognising, (and) recalling' (Jarvie & Maguire, 1994: 186) led to a habitus that not only became manifested in their 'tastes', choices and lifestyles (Laberge, 1995) but in many cases emerged as a corporeal physical embodiment (Jarvie & Maguire, 1994) of their long-term social experiences and relationships as part of a strong working-class community.

This long-term exposure to particular social influences and relationships, therefore, meant that similarities existed and emerged among all lads at ACS (to varying degrees). In the first instance it was clear that parents of lads at ACS were more likely to apply an

'accomplishment of natural growth' approach that extended to external praise and rewards (Bodovski, 2010; Lareau, 2003) rather than the more comprehensive, deeply embedded cultural pattern (Lareau, 2003) more synonymous with the middle-class parents. It was also evident that the maximum free time often 'harnessed to maximise the cultural capital' of their (middle-class) children (Bourdieu, 2004: 19) was not the case for lads and parents linked to ACS. Therefore, due to the fact that parents in Ayrefield did not possess the cultural (and in some cases financial) resources to develop their children's academic capital and learning orientations (Bourdieu, 1986) the lads found it much harder (to varying degrees) to match the values and dispositions expected at school (Ball, 2010; Bourdieu, 2004; Webb et al., 2005). That is not to say that this held back the engagement and achievement of all of them, but just that almost all lads at ACS began school in a relatively disadvantaged state of learning readiness (Ball, 2010). Those that did achieve (Performers and some Participants) did so *in spite* of the upbringing, rather than *due* to it.

Secondly, and more significantly in relation to the specific focus of this study, it was evident that the attitudes, actions, and social contacts of parents/families had limited the sporting habitus of their children. This was not only in relation what they were able to perform and engage in regarding skills and knowledge (Bourdieu, 1984; Pot et al., 2014; Quarmby & Dagkas, 2012; Wheeler, 2012) but also the likelihood of them being able to become 'involved' with a wide range of sports clubs/ activities (Green et al., 2013; Jakobsson et al., 2012; Light et al., 2013; Nielsen et al., 2012; Stuij, 2013). The lack of deliberate parenting, therefore, limited the extent to which the lads were able and/or willing to become involved in a range of sports. In addition, the fact that much of their participation and sports development took place informally among friends (Stuij, 2013) meant that the lads only really experienced a strong 'sense of place' (Bourdieu, 1984: 471) when involved in activities deemed more for the likes of them (such as fishing and football). As a consequence, the lads of Ayrefield, had come to view the way that they spent their leisure

time – predominantly involved in recreational football, video games and hanging out’ with friends - as a ‘normal’ and ‘natural’ (Bourdieu, 1990) feature of their lives, not least because it was something that they valued both individually and collectively (Bourdieu, 1989) within their strong working-class community.

Overall, therefore, the findings in this study relate closely to the concepts of capital and habitus in the sense that lads at ACS had been endowed with the type of habitus (Bourdieu, 1993) that consistently stood to constrain what they did in their spare time and how they viewed school and educational success. However, despite these similarities between all lads at ACS as a result of their upbringing in Ayrefield, the findings consistently highlighted the fact that the impact of school and the Leaders groupings more specifically led subtle yet significant changes to their habitus. In this regard, Bourdieu and Wacquant acknowledged that whilst not easily changed, a person’s habitus is an ‘open system of dispositions’ (1992: 133) that, whilst not easily changed, does not consistently determine a person’s social action (Bourdieu, 1984) throughout their life. Therefore, as with Elias, Bourdieu is keen to highlight the fact that a person’s habitus is very much enduring yet not totally determining of their actions through life, and in relation to this study this emerged as an important feature in attempting to explain the splits between the three lads groups at ACS.

Influence of the school as a social field.

Effectively it did seem that the lads were continually torn between differing social fields that led to changes in the expectations and forms of doxa to which they were subsequently exposed. In many cases, and for the Problematic lads in particular, these changes often led to stark contrasts and conflicts between what was expected of them at home, in school, and even within their friendships/lads groups.

In the first instance, the wider community of Ayrefield and the long-term relationships with their families was clearly a site where boundaries and internal social structures (Hay, 2005: 46) stood to define the 'rules' and values that were expected of these working-class lads. The social field of Ayrefield was evidently a site of cultural reproduction where particular norms, behaviours, and attitudes were both reproduced and favored (Bourdieu, 1984, 1986). More specifically, when immersed in the social-field of their community, particular types and levels of capital were viewed as being socially valuable or legitimate (Bourdieu, 1989, 1986). As a result, the concept of symbolic capital emerged as being important in the study due to the fact that particular abilities were very much accepted, reproduced, and valued as 'the rules of the game' (Bourdieu, 1992: 98) in the working-class community of Ayrefield that would not have been in other communities (Bourdieu, 1984).

The findings also highlighted the fact that socially valuable, working-class behaviours and characteristics such as masculinity, physicality and toughness were prominent, significant, and historical features of life in Ayrefield. An outcome of this was that the production and possession of a specific form of physical capital was recognized as having particular value in social field of Ayrefield. In addition, this physical capital could be (and seemingly generally was) converted or exchanged (Webb et al., 2005) into other forms of capital, status, and dominance within the local community. Because types of physical capital that were promoted and valued in this working-class community were very class-dependent (Bourdieu, 1978, 1984, 1986) this then impacted on the ways in which these physical forms were converted in to other forms of capital. The masculine and aggressive management of bodies that was common, valued, and promoted among the males of Ayrefield, therefore, was often used to gain economic capital in the form of physically demanding working, as well as symbolic capital and status via a perceived ability (among other things) to drink heavily or 'handle yourself' (Shilling, 2004).

In this sense, it was evident that certain 'rules' and expectations pertaining to the social field meant certain types of capital could be (and were) valued over others (Hay, 2005). Although these rules clearly did not exist as a formal expectation as such, the social expectations that came to impact on all members of the community (including the lads) were no 'less powerful or influential' (Hay & MacDonald, 2010: 4). The working-class values of Ayrefield as a community, therefore, were evidently a site of cultural reproduction where particular norms and boundaries not only existed, but where certain behaviours, actions and attitudes were favored and reproduced by all residents (Bourdieu, 1984,1986) - either consciously, subconsciously, and maybe even both.

However, it was evident within the study that the school site existed as the type of social field that contrasted (sometimes significantly) with the social expectations of life in Ayrefield. Although the transitions between home and school would be much less marked for pupils from middle-class backgrounds, the conflict between what was expected of them at home and at school led to a very real and significant school-effect. It has already been described in the findings that lads at ACS initially gravitated towards one another in Y7 leading to sub-groups that were then accentuated through KS3 and ultimately cemented via KS4 leaders groups. However, the general expectations imposed on all lads at ACS, and then the specific habitus and doxa that emerged within lads groups, was a key issue throughout the study. Because the lads assigned to Leaders groups found themselves in a specific social field at school for prolonged periods of time, this often close-knit social field led the lads from the three different groups to come to share a very similar habitus. This then reproduced a particular culture, lifestyle, and set of beliefs and behaviours (Bourdieu 1985, 1989) in the form of a doxa. This meant that the lads groups at ACS became increasingly isolated through their timetables, which led to differing expectations being imposed on them by staff and peers. Subsequently, differing values, beliefs, and unquestioned opinions also came to permeate their specific social fields. This led to them

displaying 'natural' behaviours and attitudes (Bourdieu, 1990) specific to their group and in some cases (Performers) the ways in which they conducted themselves at school may well contrasted with the ways that they have acted (or were at least been expected to act) at home. The reason for this appeared to relate to the fact that lads who spent increasing periods of time in their Leaders (Lads) groups came to feel most comfortable when in these specific social fields at school as those surrounding them displayed very similar attitudes and behaviours (Bourdieu, 1989).

The general prominence and significance of physical capital, therefore, was evidently a factor that accentuated the differences between the school-based social fields. The prominence of masculinity, physicality, strength, and the types of physical capital associated with, and derived from, these behaviours had caused these 'tough' actions and attitudes to be considered legitimate and valued forms of male, working-class life (Bourdieu, 1985) in and around school. Therefore, the differentiation and distribution of physical capital among the lads at ACS became a significant feature in the splits between the three groups of lads. This was due to the fact that the lads who were able to match these working-class expectations and demonstrate greater physical capital held 'the aces in a game of cards' (Bourdieu, 1985: 724) and were subsequently imbued with value, prestige, and power. As a consequence of this, a social hierarchy was established within the social field due to the fact that the symbolic capital held by the lads at ACS fluctuated wildly (Bourdieu, 1984) as certain individuals demonstrated the ability (and willingness) to engage physical properties (Bourdieu, 1985b) to varying extents.

When the processes described above are applied to the transition of lads from all groups through school at ACS, it was clear that certain lads possessed the ability to demonstrate the types of physical capital and behaviour traits that meant that they were viewed with, and were able to gain higher degrees of respect. This meant that a particular group emerged as early as Y7 due to their behaviour in lessons, physical intimidation, and

general demeanor. In contrast, 'less significant' lads gradually began to realize, and for the most part accept, their place at school as result of their inability (and to some extent unwillingness) to demonstrate the physical attributes and capital that would lead to status and power in the social field of their year group/school.

One of the key outcomes of this acknowledgement of power and status among the lads during KS3, was the fact that certain groups of lads began to gravitate towards (as well as away from) one another throughout KS3. This provided the social and academic basis for the lads' allocation to their respective Leaders groups. As a result of this, therefore, the social outcomes that had emerged from their relative possession of physical capital and the groupings that had formed as early as Y7, all became accentuated and effectively confirmed as a result of the KS4 Leaders groups. The lads assigned to their respective Leaders groups (and the three lads groups more broadly) began to emerge as specific social fields *within* the broader social field of the school. This subsequently led to certain doxas developing within what were often quite clear school-based habitus. So, as the lads began to separate from one another, firstly socially and then more formally in KS4, particular taken for granted beliefs, values, and perceptions of themselves and others (Bourdieu, 1990) emerged and developed. This then came to embody not only the way that they behaved, and also expected others in the group to behave, but also came to impact on the ways that they were viewed and treated around school. This gradual, but ultimately significant, alteration of the lads' beliefs and values within the school environment and the emergence of specific doxas within their respective groups can also be explained in relation to the acknowledgement by Bourdieu (1984) that the possession of capital is never static. Indeed, for Bourdieu (1992:120) in relation to this, it is important to acknowledge that individuals and groups utilise a range of resources in differing ways and in order to develop a 'sense of the game' (Bourdieu, 1992: 120). As all lads formed identities for themselves based on their possession of socially legitimate and valued forms

of capital then, they subsequently began to 'know their place' as they progressed towards and into KS4. As a result the initial splits evident between the lads in KS3 became accentuated while at school.

Problematic lads in education

For the Problematics in particular, their physical presence, intimidatory actions, and disruptive behaviour in and around school (smoking at the school gates) were examples of the utilizing legitimate physical capital in order to possess and then develop symbolic capital, power, and dominance in the social field. This outcome was something that the Problematic lads were well aware of and subsequently worked hard to accentuate and protect. As a result, many of the Problematics entered in to the types of behaviour and reputation building around school with a level of commitment that demonstrated the fact that were actively pursuing the social 'prizes' that the display of behaviour brought at ACS. Indeed, the social prestige and status that emerged from displays of legitimate physical capital at school also provided a 'pull' for lads who were on the social outskirts at school existed and subsequently engaged in forms disruptive behaviour and manners of dress in an attempt to gain a social position among the Problematics

Perhaps not surprisingly, an outcome of the Problematic lads' particular values and socially influenced actions at school within their specific social field was that they developed and promoted specific 'intangible nuances of manner and style' that did not fit the dominant culture of formal schooling school (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1979). These came to include negative and disruptive behaviour in lessons and a flouting/ignoring of school rules (e.g. smoking on campus) around school. As a consequence of this, the Problematic lads also gradually developed a set of behaviours and expectations (doxa) among them that influenced how they viewed each other as well as how others viewed and treated them. This led to the Problematics developing a 'sub-culture which, in its language, dress and

modes of behaviour (was) consciously at odds with the cultivated official culture of the school' (Webb et al., 2005: 123). The actions and reputation of the Problematic lads in KS4, therefore, placed them and their actions and attitudes in constant conflict with the formal expectations of school life.

As a further consequence of this, there was also evidence that their actions, attitudes, attainment and even 'label' (Resourceful Leaders) had led the Problematics to emerge as 'victims' of a form of pedagogic action described by Bourdieu and Passeron (1990). This is where such lads' academic abilities in particular become viewed as 'natural' leading to them accepting their position at the bottom of the academic ladder (Webb et al., 2005) as being a result of their own internal shortcomings (Reed-Danahay, 2005). In relation to the outcomes at ACS specifically, there was evidence that the Problematic lads had come to be viewed as a marginalised group whose actions and attitudes were out of place at school (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1979) and as a result, were never going to be able to ever achieve 'legitimate' success (Webb et al., 2005). It was also apparent that these lads had also come to 'accept' their position at the bottom of the academic hierarchy (a process that may well have begun in primary school) and even see themselves as 'naturally thick'.

Given these processes, therefore, it is perhaps not surprising that the Problematic lads took a great deal from their vocational college courses. This was due to the fact that the dominant culture (Bourdieu, 1977, 1984) of the physical and practically-based college courses stood to match a culture more akin to their own behaviours, values, and language and this led them to feel much more 'at home' when at school/college (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1979). Secondly, and perhaps more significantly, it was also evident that the Problematics were aware that they possessed the types of physical capital that were culturally significant (Harker et al., 1990) in this more working-class environment. At college, not only could they engage in the physical skills and behaviours that were more synonymous with their wider social values (bricklaying, swearing, smoking), but that the

college lecturers were subsequently imbued with symbolic capital as a result of their skills, background, and demeanour in the learning environment. Ultimately then, time spent at college became a particular social field where the Problematic lads engaged in tasks that they valued highly, with staff that they respected, and in a manner that suited their *habitus* and *doxa*.

Partly as a result of their experiences at college, the Problematics had become increasingly aware that the demonstration and promotion of such masculine 'abilities' and actions could be 'exchanged' (Calhoun & Jenkins, 1994; Webb et al., 2005) for power, dominance and symbolic capital over the rest of their peers and in some cases staff too. Significant levels of symbolic capital were often developed (especially with teachers that they did not respect or value) and subsequently utilised by many of the Problematic lads at ACS due to the fact that aggression and masculinity were viewed as being socially valuable (Bourdieu, 1989, 1986) among the lads at school. The outcomes of this social pressure often left many staff unable to influence the outcomes linked to the actions of the Problematics. This was often due to the fact the Problematics saw great social value in the way that they behaved around school and as a consequence they would consistently engage in public displays of aggression and masculinity that intimidated both peers and many of the teaching staff. In many cases this meant that these lads could only be contained rather than controlled and peers either avoided or accepted the Problematic lads for what they were and had the potential to do.

Ultimately, therefore, in relation to the focus of the study this power and dominance over peers, teachers, and finally PE staff, came to influence their ability and willingness to negotiate their school and PE experiences.

Problematic lads in PE

The fact that the Problematics had also been able to isolate themselves in their PE lessons meant that the playing of competitive football in these lessons emerged as being an extension of the social field described above. The long-term intimidation of the Participants, and the total absence of the Performers, meant that PE lessons for the Problematics included the specific habitus and doxa that was strongly associated with the masculine and physical expectations imposed on them, and in many cases *by* them.

As a consequence of this, PE lessons during KS4 were socially valued opportunities for the Problematic lads to display and even promote their physical and symbolic capital both across their year group and within their friendship/lads group. In the first instance, it was evident that their refusal to get changed in to recognised PE kit (if at all), their constant swearing in lessons, and the demands of PE staff that they organise their own full-sized matches, were further public displays of their power at ACS. Indeed this was done in order to extend the degrees of symbolic capital and status that they held over their peers and PE staff. It could even be argued that specific forms of doxa and social expectation that had emerged among this group by KS4, also meant that to get changed into PE kit and adhere to demands/request from staff to play other sports would have conflicted starkly with the values and expectations of the groups and would have resulted in lack of status and respect. To be true Problematic lads, getting changed and doing what you were told/asked was not an option, especially by Y11.

Secondly, the nature of PE as a subject and the way in which it was delivered at ACS in particular, meant that the physical abilities, traits, and characteristics displayed by the Problematics (both in PE and around school generally), were the 'right' skills and attributes to gain social value in the field (Edwards & Imrie, 2003; Lee et al., 2009). The nature of their PE lessons/curriculum in previous years, and KS4 lessons more specifically, had led the Problematics to be aware that their physical, masculine, and often aggressive actions and attitudes in PE enabled them to be a 'proper' boy (Swain, 2003) by displaying the 'right'

forms of physical capital that led to status among their peers (Redelius et al., 2009; Shilling, 1991, 2003). In this sense, the display and development of culturally significant types of physical capital - namely tough, physical masculine behavior - was significant to the Problematic lads (Bourdieu, 1990) within competitive football especially. This was due to the fact that particular types of bodies and dispositions linked to certain activities (football, weight training) can be 'tradable' for even greater levels of peers respect (Hill, 2013) compared to the less significant activities (almost everything except football). Ultimately, therefore, the symbolic capital, status, and power of the Problematics developed and maintained during their time at school was inextricably linked to the ways that they demand and 'negotiate' the manner of their PE lessons in KS4. PE not only enabled them to demonstrate and promote their symbolic capital via their socially constructed and valid physical capital, but 'success' in the physical and masculine arena that is KS4 football lessons, also allowed them to further develop symbolic capital and even exchange this 'off the pitch' for social capital, popularity, and respect (Hill, 2013; Hunter, 2004; Portman, 1995; Sparkes et al., 2007; Swain, 2003).

Performers and Participants in education

What appeared to be significant among the Performers and Participants was the fact that they had accepted that they did not have the desired and legitimate physical capital to gain symbolic capital and status in the broader social field of school. As a consequence, many of these lads had embarked on 'playing the game' (Bourdieu, 1992) related more closely to the formal expectations of the school in order to optimise their academic and economic success going forward. Although this outcome had been facilitated by the isolation that came with separate teaching groups and qualifications in general lessons, the Performers and Participants had evidently controlled aspects of their behaviour, conformed to school rules, and engaged in largely positive relationships with their teachers in order to find their

place within the field that matched the expectations of the teachers (Bourdieu, 1992). Perhaps most importantly, it was also evident that both groups of lads (and the Participants in particular) had accepted their lowly position within the school social structure and simultaneously become aware of the various advantages associated with 'playing the game' (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992) and success at school.

Through their relative conformity to school rules, therefore, the Participants and Performers were able to acquire relevant physical capital and develop an appropriate habitus that enabled them to function effectively within the site of formal school (Holroyd, 2002). That is not to say, however, that this was/is a straight forward and easily achievable process for the Performers and Participants who were continually influenced by the values, demands, and expectations associated with being a young working-class male and the significant demands of the peer group (Soudien, 2001). Instead, it is important to acknowledge that even though many of these lads were unable to demonstrate socially desirable and valuable physical capital in the social field of school, they were still continually involved in conflicting desires and standards that existed between school and social expectation. As a consequence it was evident that the behaviour and attitudes of the Participants and Performers at school had emerged as a result of 'diverse influences' on the construction of their identities (Holroyd, 2002) that were consistently linked to a need to conform to an element of social compromise (Soudien, 2001). Although the Performers and Participants took a great deal from their respective isolation and relative academic achievement in lessons, therefore, they had to be (and generally were) consistently aware that this needed to be placed in context with the wider expectations upon them as working-class 'lads'.

Participants in education and PE

For the Participants in particular, however, they were well aware that they lacked the social and physical capital to challenge the Problematics. As a result, they were obliged to conform to the school-based 'official' regulations presented to them. This subsequently led to them developing and displaying the types of social norms that enabled them to successfully engage in the field of formal school and function more effectively in the context of school (Holroyd, 2002). Therefore, the Participants were able to take on a set of behaviours and attitudes that matched the requirements for relative educational 'success'. They were also able to develop a degree of academic capital as part of their cultivated school-based habitus that had enabled them to possess the relevant and required cultural resources that enhanced their potential and actual success at school (Bourdieu, 1986). Being able to 'keep their heads down' at school in relative isolation from their more able or disruptive peers, therefore, allowed the Participants to do their very best at school (free from disruption) and hopefully gain good qualifications and a desirable future career.

In relation to PE, it was evident that the way in which the Participants had come to experience and view education generally had a great bearing on the ways that they were willing and able to control their PE experiences. In the first instance, there was no evidence that the Participants were party to the same, strong heteronomous forces (Bourdieu, 1993) that were evident among the Performers and so they were not under the same levels or types pressures to engage in a wider PE curriculum at KS4. In addition it also seemed that the Participant lads did not necessarily see the need or perhaps more realistically the opportunity, to utilise PE (and the playing of football) as a realistic way to boost their symbolic capital. Whilst football was something that the Participants *did* largely value, *could* play, and generally enjoyed, they were neither good enough to gain status from it, nor were they willing to play in the overtly physical and competitive manner typical of the Performers.

Overall, therefore, it did seem that the Participants were 'happy' to apply a similar approach and attitude to PE to that of their general education. In doing so they did appear

to enjoy PE, which was enhanced by the opportunity to maintain the level of isolation that had become popular among the Participants in all areas of their school, lives. However, their attitude towards the subject of PE was more one of 'getting by' rather than being based a strong desire to improve or develop.

Performers in education and PE

In spite of their traditional working-class upbringing, it was evident that the Performers had gradually, but significantly, taken on a set of actions, attitudes, and beliefs (in the form of a school based doxa) that meant these pupils had emerged as being much more akin (at least in relative terms) to more middle-class pupils at school. They were more able to express themselves confidently at school, 'speak the same language' as that required for academic success (Bourdieu, 1984, 2004), and ultimately demonstrate the types of behaviours that matched the dominant culture of Western schools (Bourdieu, 1973, 1974). Because of the fact that the Performers acted in the ways that they did, it was also evident that this group of lads had legitimacy, prestige, and value place upon them by teaching staff (Bourdieu, 1971, 1973, 1974, 1984, 1994; Bourdieu & de Saint-Martin, 1974; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977) due to types of behaviours they displayed in and around school. This then often resulted in them being viewed and treated in distinctly different ways to that of their peers. However, it is worth reiterating that these actions did not result from the promotion and development of values and dispositions at home in a process common among middle-class families described by Bourdeu (Webb et al., 2005). Instead, it was evident that the social processes *within* the school environment had caused the Performer lads to take on a school-based habitus both around school generally, as well as within their isolated Leaders group more specifically. As a result, a particular doxa had emerged among the Performer lads at ACS in that externally imposed expectations and demands

had caused the Performers to adopt a set of beliefs and values regarding how they should respond to these expectations. The Performers also came to internalise these pressures, expectations, and beliefs to the extent that a sense of group competition and mutual motivation and encouragement was a key factor towards ensuring that they did their very best to optimise their chances of success and respond to the external and internal pressures by which they were influenced. Overall, therefore, it was evident that the school structure and the social processes at work among and between the lads at ACS were the primary cause of the differing levels of attainment and engagement while at school.

Set against this, however, was the awareness among the Performers (as well as their peers generally) that such characteristics, actions, and attitudes were not those expected among 'real' working-class lads. The Performers were aware that the level and types of academic capital that they formulated for themselves at school could not be exchanged (Webb et al., 2005) for any real form of power or prestige (Crossley, 2012) at ACS. Indeed, by engaging in the more 'feminine' behaviours more synonymous with middle-class pupils, the Performers actually had the potential to emerge as a group that were marginalised, excluded, and even berated due to the conflict between academic ability/engagement and the expectations linked to working-class beliefs and values. However, the Performers were able to gain some form of symbolic capital and prestige (if not power) as a result of their demonstration (currently and historically) of physical capital as a result of their ability to play football well and 'properly'. Indeed, in several cases both Problematic and Performers played side by side in Y10 and Y11 football teams and while there was no obvious friendship evident in these situations a strong degree of mutual respect was palpable before, during, and after matches while representing school.

Ultimately, therefore, given the issues highlighted above, it did seem that the Performers at ACS had the potential to build and develop wide capital portfolios that would lead to successful educational pathways, rewarding careers, and lives away from Ayrefield.

However, it was very much evident that the ingrained habitus relating to their working-class background, the reality of their capital portfolios, and their attitudes towards self-development had a tendency to bring them back to Ayrefield. In this regard, despite the Performers ability and willingness to respond positively to the more 'middle-class' expectations of Western education, these had been largely a pragmatic approach to achieving at school rather than a deep-seated cultural attitude and approach linked to the more instrumental relationship with the development of their bodies (Bourdieu, 1978). The Performers viewed the academic capital that they had gained and developed during their time at ACS solely as a means of converting this into economic capital (good salary in adulthood) rather than as a way of developing additional aspects of their capital portfolios such as the cultural and social capital. 'Real' middle-class pupils may well have seen the opportunity to use their success at school to generate social and cultural contacts and experiences that will benefit them more broadly in later life. However, the high achieving Performers saw their examination success as a way of going to college and university before earning good salaries in order to adequately provide for their families. Ultimately then, it was these factors, as well as their working-class backgrounds more generally, that came to influence the ways that they came to experience PE at ACS.

When the attitudes, behaviours and emergence of the Performers is related to PE more specifically, the actual nature of their attitude and approach to education/school played an important role in determining their experiences of, and attitudes towards the subject. In the first instance, the class related nature of their narrow sporting repertoires and the constraining influence of the Problematic lads in KS3 was a significant limiting factor on their ability and willingness to fully engage in PE throughout their time at ACS. However, perhaps most significant influence in relation to their approach to PE was the specific doxa that had developed among the Performers during their time at ACS that led to them to adopt particular attitudes and approaches to qualifications and by default

GCSE/AS level PE. This attitude and application to PE throughout school may well be linked to claims that the working classes, have more instrumental and pragmatic views towards the development of their bodies (Shilling, 2004; Boudieu, 1978). For the Performers, this appeared to have limited their desire to develop their sporting repertoires through PE due a failure or unwillingness to see the longer-term benefits in doing so. However, the Performers' behaviour in lessons and responses from PE staff in focus groups indicated that the heteronomous forces that are increasingly impacting upon the modern Western education system (Bourdieu, 1993; Webb et al., 2005) were causing the Performers to apply their broader approaches to education and qualifications to the subject of PE. Therefore, the combination of their class-related habitus, the constraining impact of game-based, football dominated KS3 PE lessons, and their pragmatic and short-term view of education in relation to qualifications meant that the Performers were content with taking part in the sports prescribed to them by staff in order to gain the best possible grades.

Physical education at ACS

The wider implications regarding the ability of PE at ACS (and working-class PE per se) to positively impact on the sporting repertoires of male pupils is based on several key principles and issues when examined in relation to the work of Bourdieu. Firstly it is important to highlight the fact that capital portfolios of the lads and their respective families were not conducive to the development of a range of skills, knowledge, or sport-based contacts that leads to the wide and diverse social repertoires more synonymous with the middle-class. The lads at ACS were not involved in the sorts of social relationships and experiences that enabled them to develop the types of social and cultural capital that leads to regular and organized involvement in various sports on which PE staff can build and promote in PE. Secondly, the lads from Ayrefield had also been influenced by their instrumental view of their bodies and the 'common indulgence' that Bourdieu (1984: 838)

suggests is a key theme in working-class life compared to the emphasis on the body as a project more synonymous with the middle-class. As a result this not only came to impact on the manifestations of their physical attributes and choices (Bourdieu, 1984) (i.e. what they *can* and *will* do) but also limited the likelihood and ability of them responding positively to being taught/coached, physically developed, and educated. Thirdly, and in relation to the previous point in particular, the type of physical capital that is valued, promoted, and leads to value in the social field is closely linked to the class-based orientations of the body. Although physical capital and the way it is viewed, interpreted, and utilized is important to all young males during their adolescence to some extent, the 'right' skills and abilities that can be used in order to gain value in the field (Edwards & Imrie, 2003) are very much limited to physical bodywork in the form of aggression, power, strength, and competition for the lads at ACS. Therefore, the lads at ACS were aware of the fact that they must develop the 'right' kind of strong and skilled body to have status as proper working-class boys (Swain, 2003) especially if they wanted to gain status and symbolic capital among their peers (Bourdieu, 1990; Redelius et al., 2009; Shilling, 1991, 2003). In contrast to a broader view of middle-class males, therefore, the level and value of this physical capital is accentuated when bodies and dispositions are linked to certain activities (Hill, 2013) that often lead to many other 'less suitable' activities being devalued or avoided. As all lads at ACS (including those unable to achieve or display legitimate physical capital) were well aware that physical competence, strength, and literal and metaphorical physical presence had the potential to lead to symbolic capital and status, therefore, it also meant that they acknowledged the fact that physical ability could be exchanged 'off the pitch' for social capital (Hunter, 2004; Sparkes et al., 2007; Swain, 2003) and/or popularity and respect (Hill, 2013; Portman, 1995).

Given the point raised above, it was evident that in order for lads across all three group to engage and participate in a wider range of sports with any degree of long-term

commitment, the activity would need to be closely linked to something that they could already do (Futsal) and/or matched the doxa linked to the working-class expectations of their particular social field. In this regard, it was apparent that the right facilities and even capital expenditure would need to be linked to activities such as weight training, fishing and suitable forms of cycling (e.g. mountain biking, BMX), while activities such as hockey, tennis, gymnastics, dance would always be difficult to deliver effectively. More realistically, there was scope for sporting repertoires to be developed via the delivery of on-site suitable activities delivered in a confident and committed manner by PE staff. However, their competencies, abilities, and knowledge would need to be addressed if this was to be a realistic and effective approach to expanding the lads' sporting repertoires and interests. Ultimately though, KS3 PE at ACS was very much dependent on a narrow form and definition of physical capital due to the dominance of game-related lessons in KS3 and the strong emphasis on football in previous years. As a consequence, this style, structure, and content of PE at ACS served to support and perpetuate the type of physical capital valued and displayed by the more physically able and dominant lads. The longer term outcomes of this can also be linked to the inability of PE delivered in this manner impacting positively on the actions and attitudes of lads regarding their sporting participation and preferences. In the first instance, even for those lads that benefit from the manner of PE at ACS (Problematics and Performers), the types of physical capital developed and promoted failed to have much value outside the immediate social field and even the wider working-class community. Therefore, although being good at playing football for example, or playing the game in the 'right' way can lead to the possession and conversion of various forms of capital, these attributes, abilities and forms of capital often have very little value when applied to the wider world (i.e. at university for the Performers). Secondly, the way in which PE was structured and delivered at ACS stood to marginalize the less legitimate skills and attributes held by the Participants in particular that may well have led to them emerging as

successful products of school PE. Overall, therefore, while ever the focus of working-class PE remains on physical attributes linked to working-class life, large groups of male pupils, and the Participants especially, were able to develop or demonstrate forms of physical capital that could, and should, be features of contemporary physical education – namely, officiating, leadership/teaching, analysis. The actual and potential abilities of numerous students were consistently overlooked in PE due to the fact that their abilities did not match the ‘right’ and valued physical capital. Also the structure and delivery of PE did not (and does not) afford many pupils the opportunity to demonstrate their ‘alternative’ forms of physical capital and the subsequently social ‘benefits’ that this may lead to.

The aim of this chapter has been to explain the main findings of the study in relation to the previous literature and the academic work of Norbert Elias and Pierre Bourdieu. The following chapter will summarise the context, method, and main findings of the study, before highlighting and discussing some of the implications related to the discussion.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

Context for the study

The aims of the research were influenced by the long standing claims that differences in sports participation rates exist between social class groups in Britain (Birchwood et al., 2008; Fox & Rickards, 2004; Van Tuyckom & Scheerder, 2010). More specifically, those from the middle-classes are up to three times more likely to be physically active in adulthood (Scheerder et al., 2005a) and recent evidence suggests that rates for adults from the lower social class groups are gradually decreasing (Sport England, 2015). Research suggests that these participation anomalies are closely linked to the fact that exposure to, and committed involvement and engagement in, a wide range of sports as children is more likely to lead to a lifetime involvement in sport and active leisure (Jakobsson et al., 2012; Roberts, 2014; Roberts & Brodie, 1992). Working-class adults are much more likely to develop narrow sporting repertoires during childhood, while middle-class families/parents are more likely to 'invest' in the physical development and wider sporting repertoires of their children (Evans & Bairner, 2013; Wheeler, 2014; Wheeler & Green, 2014). As a consequence, it is the wider sporting repertoires more common among young middle-class people that provide a basis for the differences in participation rates among adults between different social class groups.

In relation to the attempts to address these class-related anomalies, one of the supposed aims of PE in mainstream schools has been to increase the participation of all young people across a broader range of sport and leisure pursuits (Coalter, 2004; Evans & Davies, 2010; Green, 2000, 2012; Trudeau & Shepard, 2008). However, there are strong claims that PE in working-class schools 'flatter to deceive' (Evans & Davies, 2008: 201) and as a result the subject ultimately fails in its attempts to promote and increase 'life-long

participation' (Green, 2014; Kirk, 2002). Alarmingly, there are also claims that the structure and delivery of PE in many working-class schools may even be perpetuating the existing social differences that exist (Dagkas, 2011; Wright & O'Flynn, 2007) as the subject of PE 'fails to have the desired effect of altering social patterns and inequalities and the predispositions for sport amongst individuals and populations once they leave school' (Evans & Davies, 2010: 768-69).

Study design and aims

Set against this backdrop, the aim of this study was to examine the PE experiences of white, working-class male pupils (lads) attending a mainstream secondary school. More broadly, an attempt was made to consider how the social background, upbringing, leisure profiles, and attitudes to school/education of the lads came to impact on the ways that they viewed, influenced, and participated in their PE lessons. The ultimate aim, therefore, was to develop a deeper understanding of, and an explanation for, the class-related participation trends that exist among adults from different social backgrounds.

The research questions were focused on examining the extent to which the KS4 lads were able to negotiate the content and delivery of their PE lessons as well as how the PE staff at the school responded to the varying demands placed on them by the lads. By extension, the study also aimed to examine how the lads' social class backgrounds and range of social relationships came to influence their attitudes towards, and actions in PE, as well as how the staff responded to their male pupils. Finally, an attempt was also made to explore the ways in which the lads' PE experiences came to impact on their sporting repertoires, interests and participation, if at all, and if this had the potential to influence future levels and types of participation in sport and active leisure.

In order to examine these issues and address the research questions, a case-study design examined a 'typical' mainstream, working-class school (ACS) over a non-

continuous 24-day period between the months of February and June 2013. This drew on evidence from lesson observations, guided conversations with pupils and staff, and focus group interviews. While the majority of observations and guided conversations took place within the PE department, additional observations and focus group interviews explored the lads' attitudes and approaches to education, their relationship with staff, the lads' leisure interests/participation outside of school, and the influence of parents, family and friends on all of these. By examining the wider social background and upbringing of a group of young working-class males, therefore, the study aimed to gain a greater understanding of how and why working-class (male) pupils came to experience PE, as well as the extent to which the lads themselves were able to negotiate, and ultimately influence aspects of lesson/curriculum design and delivery.

Summary of findings

It was evident in the study that the lads at ACS had been brought up in similar working-class families through which they had all been exposed to 'traditional' masculine pressures and expectations. Not only had this impacted on the very similar ways that they had been 'prepared' for formal schooling/education, but it had led them all to adopt very similar leisure profiles that were dominated by 'suitable', class-related activities (i.e. football and fishing) that they predominantly engaged in recreationally with friends. Despite the similarities that existed between the lads in this regard, however, a strong 'school-effect' was evident at ACS. This resulted in the lads being initially drawn together during KS3 (due in part to academic ability and engagement) and then formally separated in to KS4 via Leaders groups – a process which appeared to accentuate the process. As a result of this, the majority of lads in KS4 at ACS were assigned to one of three groups (Problematics, Performers and Participants) by the researcher. This reflected their respective Leaders group, how they were viewed and treated around school by staff/peers/friends, the

qualifications that they were undertaking, and how they viewed their future lives. With these lads groupings very much in mind, a more detailed examination of their experiences of PE formed the main focus of the study. Subsequent findings highlighted that although lads from the three groups came to experience PE at ACS in often starkly different ways, the subject had very little impact on developing the types of sporting repertoires, abilities, and knowledge that were ever likely to have a positive impact on their participation outside of school. Some lads seemingly 'chose' to take part in a relatively wide range of sports in KS4 PE (Participants), some undertook GCSE and AS level qualifications that demanded participation in a wider-range of activities (Performers), and others were able to demand large-scale games of football (as was their want) (Problematics). However, it was also clear that what they did outside of school, combined with the influence of the PE staff at ACS, meant that the types of participation and range of activities strongly preferred by the vast majority of pupils from Ayrefield – such as playing football recreationally with friends - were not altered in any meaningful sense, and in many cases were simply reinforced.

Contributions to existing knowledge

School-effect

The influence of a strong 'school-effect' was a key issue to emerge from the study in that the environment and subsequent expectations imposed on the lads at ACS led them to experience school/education (and ultimately PE) in starkly different ways. Despite no quantifiable data being collected during the study to confirm any assumptions, it did seem that subtle differences linked to the 'respectability of the lads' families may have caused particular groups to be drawn together as early as Y7. However, it was the way in which these informal groups of lads were viewed and treated around school, combined with the Leaders system in place at ACS, that caused lads from very similar social backgrounds to experience and view school and PE in very different ways. The over-arching reason for

this related closely to the wider pressures imposed on pupils, staff, and the school, as a result of requirements directly linked to results, pupil progress, and inspections. As a result, by Y11 in particular, it was clear that sub-cultures in year groups had been expanded and in some cases cemented. This occurred as a result of the ways the lads were viewed and treated by staff, peers, and each other, as well as the way that they took on very different education paths as a result of the options available to them. Although differing academic outcomes are very much part of any mainstream school, it was the similarity of the lads' background related to proactive parenting, education levels of parents, and general attitudes to school which emphasised the way in which their time at ACS had led to differing outcomes for lads from the three respective groups. Ultimately, the differing outcomes for lads at ACS meant that they came to experience their KS4 PE lessons in very different ways. Therefore, one key aspect to take from the 'school-effect' highlighted in the study was that even in schools with a significant degree of homogeneity in its pupil intake, the differences between pupils that can emerge during their time at secondary school must be acknowledged and considered in any study related to pupil outcomes.

Masculinity

A second key finding pertained to the fact that the pressures and expectations linked to being almost constantly immersed in a strong working-class culture and community was ubiquitous in all aspects of the lads' lives. As a result, this constant (if sometimes subconscious) pressure to act and think like a 'proper' working-class lad, influenced how they viewed and engaged in school/education, what they did in their own time, and then how they came to experience and influence their PE lessons. In the first instance, this impacted on what was deemed acceptable for 'lads like them' to participate in outside of school and subsequently led to them developing a very narrow range of skills and interests during their upbringing. However, more importantly, it was the opportunity, need, and ability (or not as the case may be) to demonstrate the right kinds of masculine behaviour at school

(and in PE in particular) that had the greatest impact on the actions and attitudes of the lads at ACS. Male pupils demonstrating a lack of ability (or willingness in some cases) to match this hegemonic masculinity (e.g. Participants) were effectively excluded from lessons in some cases, despite their individual preferences for activities such as football. However, the more significant contribution of the study related to the way the lads who were able and willing to match this level and type of hyper-masculinity could then utilise this for their own benefit. Perhaps the starkest example of this was the extent to which certain lads (Problematics) were consistently focused and determined to generate the types of PE lessons that matched these masculine environments. In doing so, this supported and even perpetuated the status that they held more generally both in and outside of the school environment. The impact of this willingness and ability of the most prominent and masculine lads at ACS to demand particular types of lessons in PE, had led to PE staff delivering PE lessons that were highly physical, competitive, and aggressive. This had subsequently caused lessons in KS3 to be delivered in a highly active and game-based manner across a narrow range of sports. As a consequence, this served to constrain the opportunities and development of many of their peers in PE, and led to a situation in KS4 where the need to display acceptable and valued forms of masculinity meant that these lads would only take part in large-scale, competitive games of football in PE.

Another key finding related to the influence of hegemonic masculinity was the fact that activities 'offered' in PE that did not match this exalted type of working-class masculinity (dance/gymnastics), and/or provided the very real threat of public failure and a resulting loss of status, were dismissed out of hand (Problematics). Ultimately, when this finding is considered in relation to the narrow range of skills and interests that all lads arrived at ACS with, one must consider how likely males from working-class backgrounds are to actively engage in curriculum activities that do not match what they *can* do or value being *able* to do.

Leisure lifestyles and sporting repertoires

The sporting repertoires and the ways in which these working-class lads engaged in active leisure was another key finding and contribution of the study. The constraining impact on the extent to which the lads at ACS were both willing and able to engage in the type of PE that could promote their long, and short-term engagement/participation was very closely linked to the narrow range of recreational activities that they participated in outside of school. The issue here was not that the lads were not actively engaged in physical activity during their free time. In fact, along with a range of Europe-wide studies, there was evidence from focus group responses that these lads were no less active as any other group of their age. Neither was there any really concern linked to the types of activities in which the lads in Ayrefield were engaged during their leisure time, such as recreational football and fishing. The key contribution of the findings in the study actually relates to the range of activities within which the lads were involved, as well as the ways in which they viewed any need or desire to extend these. Significantly, therefore, the manner in which almost all lads at ACS spent their leisure time meant that they were only engaged in a handful of activities that had the potential to remain part of their sporting repertoires into adulthood. It has already been stated that lads at ACS were not expanding their sporting repertoires via their PE experiences. However, it was the manner of the lads' subsequent narrow sporting participation and interest that then stood to limit the possibility of them remaining active into adulthood.

In addition to this, the apparent lack of proactive support and engagement on the part of families/parents to expand on this range of activities was also a constraining influence and key contribution of the study. Indeed, not only was there very little evidence that parents of lads in the study were engaged in the structured and proactive approach synonymous with middle-class families, but the nature of the lads' free time (predominantly

engaged in recreational, unsupervised activity), meant that this narrow range of activities were highly likely to be encouraged and perpetuated. The fact that the lads had been almost entirely reliant on recreational participation with friends in order to attain and develop their sporting skills and knowledge, therefore, meant that they were not used to the structured and focused learning environments that would be required to expand their sporting repertoires, skills, and interests.

Overall, lads across all three groups were arriving, and then leaving ACS, with the same types of narrow sporting repertoires with which they had arrived, which were dominated by sedentary activities (such as video gaming and fishing) played recreationally among friends. As a consequence, a key contribution of the study related to the combination between restricted sporting repertoires, the inability/unwillingness of lads to engage in structured activity, and the ineffectiveness of PE in addressing these. This seemed to have the potential to become an increasingly significant issue as these lads grew older, and recreational playing and 'hanging out' with friends, almost inevitably becomes severely restricted as a result of their work and life commitments in adulthood.

Influence of PE staff and teacher-pupil relations

An additional contribution of the study relates to the impact of the PE staff on the types of activities delivered in PE. The manner in which they were taught meant that the lads at ACS were not entirely responsible for the seemingly inadequate PE curricula and lessons that they received. In this regard, it is worth repeating that the PE teachers at ACS did not see the lads as physically incapable and instead consistently acknowledged the socially constructed nature of their sporting repertoires, skills, and knowledge. In addition, it was also evident that the PE teachers at ACS did indicate some sense of professional pride and obligation to develop and enhance the sporting repertoires of the lads at ACS in their focus group responses. However, their own subject confidence and competence emerged

as a significantly limiting factor on the ability of PE at ACS to develop the lads' sports skills and knowledge. The PE teachers evidently lacked the subject knowledge and confidence to teach several 'key' activities, some of which may well have suited the lads at ACS (e.g. rugby union) and in contrast clearly favoured the teaching of activities that suited their own subject knowledge and interests (e.g. football, table tennis, fitness). When the lads expressed a desire to engage in game-based, active lessons in KS3 and the Problematic lads actively demanded a football-dominated PE curriculum, it was clear that the lads at ACS were effectively 'pushing at an open door'. This was essentially due the limited ability of PE staff to confidently reach across a range of activities in KS3, as well as the professional and personal preferences and interests held by PE staff themselves regarding the lads' most popular activities (football).

Secondly, another major contribution of the study related to the increasing ability of adolescent boys to constrain the actions and attitudes of their (PE) teachers as a result of the increasingly democratic relationships that existed between the two. Although school rules and expectations did constrain the actions and experiences of the lads in many aspects of the school life, it was evident that the most prominent and powerful lads in particular were equally able to influence the PE department to provide them with what they wanted in PE, as well as the manner in which they received it. In relation to this, therefore, the increasing power of pupils over teachers in many modern state schools meant that the lads were able to negotiate game-based PE lessons across a narrow range of sports as early as Y7. This then served to constrain the ability of all lads at ACS to positively engage and participate in any sports other than football outside of school, and in many cases inside school too. By extension, the status and power of the Problematic lads meant that they able to negotiate the types of PE lessons that not only gave them what they wanted in a manner of their preference (competitive football), but with very little input from staff regarding rules, kit, and behaviour.

PE at ACS

Overall, therefore, despite the differing experiences of PE between the three groups of lads at school, the overarching, and perhaps main finding of the study related to the extremely strong constraining impact of their social backgrounds that had become ingrained in them well before their arrival at ACS. The sporting habitus of lads across all three groups not only stood to bind them all closely together in relation to what they could do, and would do, but also pulled them all back together when outside of the school environment. As a consequence of these constraints, PE was simply something that had to be 'done', engaged in, and for some lads endured. This was either for the more tangible reasons related to success in examination PE (Performers) or the less tangible, but equally important social status that can emerge from being seen to 'play properly' in PE at school (Problematics). Therefore, PE at ACS appeared to exist as a temporary, if largely favourable, distraction that had very little impact on their skills, abilities, sporting repertoires and long-term sports participation. Indeed, a key contribution of the study related to the experiences of these working-class lads in PE was the strong influence that the lads had on their PE rather than the impact that the subject had on them. In short, despite some lads' digression towards activities other than football in PE, the lads at ACS were much more willing and able to dictate the types of PE lessons and curriculum that gave them what they wanted rather than what they needed if their sporting repertoire was to be expanded and the likelihood of long-term participation enhanced.

Ultimately then, as result of their unwillingness and inability to access the type of PE that they needed, as well as the similar unwillingness and inability of the PE staff to provide it, the lads at ACS seemed destined to participate in recreational football, video games, and course fishing, alongside visits to the local gyms upon leaving school. It was also evident that this range and type of participation was likely to persist until an age when other

limiting factors related to work, marriage, and children severely constrained, and even prevented such participation entirely.

Theoretical implications

Elias

The school effect, the dynamic nature of figurations, and game model

It has been highlighted previously in this chapter that a key contribution of the study relates to the fact that an apparent 'school effect' led to lads from very similar backgrounds having very different experiences of school and PE. Any subsequent study in to this social process within the school environment, therefore, needs to consider the fact that all figurations are both dynamic and fluid in nature (Murphy et al., 2000). More specifically, a more longitudinal study (or at least more retrospective one) that examines the school effect in greater detail would benefit from Elias's acknowledgement that all individuals are part of social bonds that exist as part of the 'perpetual growing up of individuals within a society' (Elias, 1987: 68) and that all human groups and societies are part of long-term processes that are subject to change, rather than being 'timeless static states' (Elias, 1978: 112). A key theoretical implication related to this study then, is linked to the fact that school environments include a wide-range of mutually orientated and dependent people. This is not only because all pupils attend the same school, but that distinct figurations can also emerge and develop within it (as was the case at ACS) due to the differing pressures, expectations, and interdependent relationships to which the pupils are exposed as they progress through the contemporary education system.

By extension, the consideration that school-based figurations for most (if not all) pupils become longer and more complex as they move towards Y11 should also be made. This is due to the fact that this causes pupils to become increasingly dependent upon, and interdependent with, a much greater range and number of people and groups (Goodwin &

O'Connor, 2006). This then means that the outcomes related to these evolving figurations are 'much more opaque' and subsequently more difficult to control (Elias, 1978: 68), and also that the constraining and enabling nature of these relationships can cause particular groups of people/pupils to be drawn together or indeed apart. Overall, due to the fluctuating and increasingly complex nature of the social relationships within an environment such as the school, Elias's (1978) game model emerges as a relevant way of examining and explaining how so many people will act in a way they would not act 'except under compulsion' (Elias, 1978: 94) as 'the web of human relations' (Elias, 1978: 80) determine, the moves of another, as well as the final outcome' (Green, 2000: 183). Elias's multi-level concept emerges as the ideal way of gaining a greater understanding of the multi-dimensional workings that exist in the school environment, therefore, particularly in relation to the inescapable bonds that exist between pupils, teachers, parents, and peers.

PE staff as part of their own figurations

A further theoretical implication emerging from the study relates to the influence of the PE staff and the ways in which their past and present social relationships came to influence their attitudes and actions at school. Any further study utilising the work of Norbert Elias needs to acknowledge the fact that the teachers' own social background, school experiences, and the resultant outcomes of these need to be linked to the what they can and will teach at school, at least with any sense of confidence and conviction. Although the influence of PE staff on the experiences and outcomes of PE for the lads at ACS made up a key focus of the study, any further examination in to 'working-class PE' would need to give more consideration to the interdependent relationships that staff form with the range of pupils at the school. The study would also need to consider the long-term social relationships and experiences to which the staff themselves have been, and remain a part. In this regard, although the range of issues that impacted on the leisure, school, and PE experiences of the lads was examined in detail, the actual influence of the confidence and

competence of the PE staff themselves needed to be taken into greater consideration. Not just regarding the impact that this had on the range of figurations of which they were/are a part, but then the specific ways that this came to impact on their delivery of PE and the design of the curriculum.

Functional democratisation and pupil power

One of the main influences on the ways that specific groups of lads came to experience education and PE differently at ACS relates closely to the concept of functional democratisation (Elias, 1978). When applied to PE more specifically, the ability of lads at ACS (and many working-class pupils like them) to influence the actions of the PE staff towards getting the lessons of their preference is another key theoretical consideration to emerge from the study. The reduced power differentials that Elias states have become a common feature of the relationships between previously dichotomous groups, also led to an equalling out of power between teachers and pupils. As a result, these groups have become much 'closer together' than would have been the case in previous generations leading to relationships that are based on democracy and negotiation rather than direction and prohibition (Kilminster, 1998; Mennell, 1998). This then emerges as a key consideration in any subsequent examination of pupils' PE diet, experiences, and outcomes.

Also, any study that looks at the PE experiences of pupils in schools where challenging behaviour may be an issue, must consistently acknowledge the 'peculiar paradox' between staff and pupils 'that is not at all easy for many adults [PE staff in this case] to manage' (Gouldsblom & Mennell, 1998: 191). This is especially due to the fact that 'direct' control and discipline is less of a common feature in British schools. Therefore, a key issue to emerge from this study is the manner in which pupils (and older, more challenging pupils in particular) are able to utilise the increasingly equal power differentials that exists between them and their teachers in order to control what they receive in the

name of PE. Not only is this process accentuated when activity options are presented in PE lessons due to the ability of pupils to 'vote with their feet', but it was evident in this study that teacher-pupil power relations also need to be acknowledged when examining how and why pupils are increasingly inclined to remove themselves from less favourable lessons/situations.

Bourdieu

Capital portfolios and habitus

In relation to the work of Bourdieu, the types and range of capital held by the parents/families of the lads at ACS and the subsequent capital portfolios that the lads then adopted emerged as being highly significant. In the first instance, the focus group responses suggested that very few (if any) parents were currently involved in active leisure. In this regard, therefore, a key issue to emerge pertained to the fact that parents had neither the social or cultural capital to pass on to their children due their lack of link/relationships with local sporting clubs (social) and the narrow range of class-related activities in which they were/had been involved (cultural). As a result of being exposed to these types of experiences and relationships then, almost all lads at ACS had adopted a very similar sporting habitus based on a narrow range of class-related activities.

In relation to PE more specifically, it was evident that the lads from Ayrefield were not exposed to the same cultural patterns harnessed by many middle-class parents and families towards the 'concerted cultivation' and development of their children. Not only were the lads' sporting habitus and repertoires limited, but the reliance of these working-class parents on a more 'essential assistance' approach meant that the lads at ACS were highly unlikely to ever engage in, or benefit from, structured and focused PE lessons. Therefore, Bourdieu's work can, and should, be used in order to examine the extent to

which working-class pupils are less able and also less inclined to take a positive and active role in the significant KS3 PE lessons.

Secondly, another important issue to emerge from the study pertaining to the work of Bourdieu relates closely to the concept of academic capital. The study highlights that the forms and amount of concerted and proactive academic development is low among families in Ayrefield. As a result it was evident that differences in the academic capital between the lads at ACS were almost entirely developed as part of their day to day schooling. A contribution of this study, therefore, relates to the fact that academic capital can, and indeed does, differ between working-class lads from very similar backgrounds as a direct result of the processes at work in the school environment.

The final aspect related to capital that emerged as significant was the nature and influence of physical capital within this strong working-class community. The significance of a particular form of 'working-class physical capital' in this instance resulted in the lads from Ayrefield reacting and responding to the expectations and pressures linked to it. This was either in order to maximise their physical capital that was then converted it in to symbolic capital and status, or in response not possessing or not wanting/needing to convert it. The first influence of this related to ways in which the lads came to experience and engage in school, with the Problematics more bound by this physical capital towards disengagement and disruptive behaviour at school. The Participants and Performers were much more inclined to 'play the game' of school in order to optimise their chances of academic success. In this regard, Bourdieu's work relating specifically to education emerged as being very important in relation to the three lads groups, with the concepts of pedagogic action, symbolic violence, and the ability of pupils to adapt to the dominant culture prevalent in Western schools especially significant when examining the differing ways that the lads came to experience and be influenced by school.

When viewed in relation to PE more specifically, it was evident that the Problematics themselves were very determined to utilise PE, and competitive, physical games of football in particular, in order to match and promote the forms of physical capital that they had worked very hard to cultivate and protect. It was also apparent that the specific form of physical capital developed, promoted, and valued in the working-class community of Ayrefield was always going to be at odds with the controlled, skill-based PE lessons delivered in a range of 'unacceptable' sports. This was not only the case as early as Y7, but especially as the importance of reputation and the ability of the lads to influence the actions of the PE teachers increased into KS4. As a consequence, therefore, a further contribution of the study, links closely to the types of physical capital that were valued and exposed at ACS. As only a small proportion of lads (namely Problematics and some Performers) were able to demonstrate the abilities and physical attributes that matched the expectations of working-class PE, many others (Participants) became marginalised and excluded, despite their ability to show a range of alternative, but equally important skills (e.g. coaching, refereeing).

School, leaders groups, social fields and doxa

Perhaps the most important theoretical contribution relating to the work of Bourdieu was the importance of social field. Not only were there differing social fields to which the lads were exposed (school, friends, Leaders group) but the differing expectations and values associated with each one of these led to the different outcomes associated with the three lads groups in the study. In the first instance, any similar study of working-class communities/schools would need to consider the specific social field of the community itself. This would not only consider the length of time the residents have been exposed to values and expectations present within it, but the specific impact such values and expectations have on their habitus. In relation to this study, it was evident that the influence

of home life came to impact on key issues, namely their sporting repertoires and nature of their sports participation. Secondly, however, one must then consider the extent to which the contrasting behaviour and attitudes that are expected and promoted within the social field of the school influence their actions. In this regard, it was the conflict between the social field of their home lives and the school environment that meant that a school effect emerged as a key feature of the study as lads responded to this transition between the two in starkly different ways. Although some lads were able to manage these differing expectations and values quite successfully (Participants and Performers), this was not the case for other (Problematics) who were both unwilling and unable to leave behind the types of behaviours and attitudes that were promoted among their friends, and in some cases their parents.

Finally, and perhaps most significantly, the banding system in which lads were assigned to Leaders groups stood to generate specific social fields within the broader social field of the school. Although lads were initially drawn together (and apart) by the early approach to school, the isolation of the KS4 Leaders groups generated specific social fields that generated and promoted quite specific values and behaviours. In addition, a subsequent doxa also emerged within these groups that promoted a specific culture that caused lads assigned to these groups to drift further apart within the school environment. Interestingly, however, the social field of school and the impact of banding groups were seemingly confirmed as a result of the lads returning back to 'normality' when it came to how they spent their leisure time.

Policy implications

The most pertinent policy implications that emerge from the findings of the study relate to the areas of initial teacher training (ITT) and the National Curriculum for Physical Education (NCPE).

In relation to PE teachers' training firstly, the findings in this study emphasises the need for PE staff working in working-class schools (and all PE teaches for that matter) to be adequately prepared to competently and confidently deliver the types of lessons across a range of activities/sports. In this regard, recommendations to emerge from the study suggest that more bespoke ITT opportunities and experiences should be utilised in order to address the often self-proclaimed areas for development in trainee PE teachers' subject knowledge and teaching experience. By extension, therefore, it does seem that ITT could be increasingly focused on addressing the anomalies that exist in prospective teachers' skills sets and interests by offering particular training and types of placement schools that enable PE staff to have the opportunity to address any such areas of development. That is not to say that, one year of teacher training can (or should be expected to) address the narrow sporting interest, skills, and knowledge of some trainee PE teachers. However skills audits, tailored sessions/courses, and even purposively selected placements could be designed and implemented to address this issue.

As a result of this approach, a proposed outcome would be that all PE teachers would then have the potential to provide a strong and wide-ranging platform for pupils in Y7 and Y8 in particular to build knowledge and ability as they progress through school. By delivering such a skill-based curriculum even in tough working-class schools, there would also be greater potential for many more pupils to appreciate and acknowledge the importance of guidance, feedback, and progressive practice in order to learn and improve existing skills. This suggested approach is not to ignore the increasing power of pupils in modern education, especially within tough, working-class schools such as ACS. However, it is apparent that the greater confidence and competence of PE staff across a wider range

of activities that would emerge from more strategic ITT, could be combined with the level of control and power held at KS3 in order to imbue all pupils with knowledge and skills to engage positively in a wider range of sports and activities that may promote wider participation outside of the school environment. It would be naïve to suggest that this could be effective across all activities, however, in almost all cases a 'masculine' focus could be utilised in PE lessons in order to promote positive participation among the working-class males *if*, the pupils have been provided with the basic skills that they can then apply to the lessons. Sports such as basketball, rugby, cricket, and even gymnastics and dance can (and should) be a feature of all working-class lads PE experiences throughout school if the lads are taught how to do it well and to value the skills and opportunities that emerge.

In relation to the active 'encouragement' that may be required for PE staff employed in working-class schools to deliver this wider-ranging and effective curriculum it was also apparent in the study that this may come via a more prescriptive NCPE. In relation to the PE staff at ACS more specifically, it was apparent that the less prescriptive NCPE for 2014 (DFE, 2013), had the scope to enable, and even perpetuate, the tendency for the PE department to continue to structure and deliver their curriculum in a way that matched the skills and interests of its pupils. As a consequence, this approach did not adequately address what they truly required if they were to remain active for life. In response to this outcome, while no guarantee can be made that any document will be implemented in the ways that it was intended, the findings in this study suggested that a more prescriptive and structured PE curriculum should set out specific activities in KS3 to be delivered in schools (including lifestyle activities), and may even go as far as to prescribe the specific skills and knowledge taught.

By extension, it also appears that these skills and potentially elevated levels of confidence and interest could then be strategically built up during KS4, if only in one or two of the seemingly most suitable activities covered in KS3, such as, in the case of ACS,

cricket, tennis, basketball, rugby, or athletics. In addition, it is also apparent that this broader range of activities taught at KS4 could be complimented with relevant lifestyle activities consciously offered in KS4 to promote and enhance life-long involvement as well as their future physical and mental health. As a result, even the most difficult lads such as the Problematics at ACS could realistically and confidently play basketball, rugby, cricket in PE whilst also attending the local fitness centre, and even playing snooker or fishing during their PE lessons. This could well lead to a more positive impact on the short and long term involvement in a wider range of sports/activities that could go some way to addressing the dominance of football.

Ultimately, therefore, while the study has shown that getting working-class male pupils to embrace 'new' activities is difficult, 'converting' active and largely engaged pupils who clearly enjoy PE, towards an active interest in several additional and 'acceptable' sports, such as cricket, rugby union/league, athletics and basketball, is surely not impossible. Especially if this process is viewed in the long term and involves enthusiastic and confident teaching from staff across a wider range of activities. Therefore, the findings suggest that if PE staff with limited sporting repertoires and skill-sets are empowered by a greater ability and to deliver a wider range of activities as part of progressive and skill-based lessons, there appears to be potential for many more working-class lads to be afforded the opportunity to develop a wider ability and interest to become involved in more activities both inside and outside of school.

Contributions to methodological considerations

A key contribution of the study was to confirm the suitability of a case study design when conducting a study of this kind. The prolonged and multi-method approach enabled the

researcher to enhance the opportunity to capture circumstances and incidents that were very much part of the everyday place. It also allowed for the wide range of influential factors relating to the lives of the lads and PE staff to be acknowledged and explored. In this regard, the case study proved to be an ideal design in order to consider a range of influences (home, leisure, friends) in order to get a clearer and more complete picture regarding the structure, delivery and outcomes related to PE at ACS. In addition there was also opportunity to triangulate and confirm the validity of people's actions and responses during the study via the use of more than one data source.

In relation to specific methods, those utilising such a design in future research should be aware of the positive implications related to the increasing number of staff present around school and in lessons in many modern mainstream schools. It was evident that the lads were very much used to a variety of temporary and permanent staff being features of their everyday lives at schools and this enabled the researcher to remain covert for the length of time required to ensure that true behaviours were being observed. As an extension to this, guided conversations before, during, and after lesson observations or during other aspects of the school day (lunchtime) proved a highly beneficial and useful tool in the data collection process. Although this can (and did) prove to be difficult to control and record at times, the researcher would highly recommend the use of guided conversations in any such similar research, not least because of the spontaneous and candid nature of much the data that emerged.

Finally, the relevance and influence of the researcher was a constant consideration during the study and emerged as both a theoretical and practical issue throughout. However, on reflection the recommendation would be that a close link to the area (former PE teacher) and an awareness of the nature of Ayrefield as community brought more to the data collection process that it did as an inhibitor, not least because of the acceptance

and credibility past employment as PE teacher in a working-class school provided among the PE staff.

Limitations and future directions

The main limitation related to the study, particularly with the benefit of hindsight, was the lack of quantifiable data relating to the more specific backgrounds of the lads directly involved in the study. Although there was a strong degree of confidence that the lads were all working-class, and that their broadly 'rough' and 'respectable' backgrounds had been ascertained, further information on parents/guardians would have undoubtedly proved beneficial. More specifically, data relating the household income, postal address, level of qualification, occupation, and family structure would have proved beneficial in examining and explaining the initial differences between the three groups of lads.

In relation to potential directions for further research, there is clearly scope for a similar study to take place in a 'middle-class' mainstream school close to the area of Ayrefield. In this sense, attempts could be made to explore how differing backgrounds may influence the PE experiences of male pupils from other areas. By extension, there is also scope for a more detailed examination of the feeder primary schools to ACS via a case study design in order to more confidently make the link between long term social processes and the subsequent effectiveness of the lads' PE experiences. Finally, a broader study that examines the backgrounds and training of mainstream PE teachers currently employed in what would be defined as working-class schools may prove beneficial. This may help to examine and understand the extent to which the competencies and confidences of PE staff working in such schools come to impact on the PE experiences of their pupils.

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List of Appendices

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Appendix 2: Participant Information Sheet (Pupil)

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Appendix 5: Focus Group Questions

Appendix 1



University of
Chester

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Dear Parent/Carer

As part of my PhD studies at the University of Chester I am aiming to examine the views and experiences of key stage 4 male pupils in relation to their education generally and physical education (PE), sport and leisure pursuits more specifically. In order for me to do this, your son was recently asked to take part in a focus group with several of his peers within a timetabled PE lesson. During this, all participants will answer some general questions on their experiences of PE and school life in order to develop my knowledge and understanding of this area. All verbal responses will be recorded and as a result may be used in the future as part of my final PhD thesis and any other subsequent publications. If your son's responses were to be included in any way, neither your son nor his school would be directly named or identified as all responses will remain strictly anonymous with pseudonyms (false names) used throughout any publication. Despite this assurance, if you would prefer your son not be involved in this research then please contact me via the details included below and I will remove them from the focus group list. There is no need for you to justify your decision.

In order to conduct this research I have sought permission from the head teacher XXXXXXXX and head of PE XXXXXXXX and all aspects of my study have been granted ethical approval by the University of Chester ethics committee. I also have previous experience of working in secondary schools as a PE teacher and have been subjected to all relevant child protection and criminal records checks.

Whilst I hope to gain some useful and interesting data from the interviews I also hope that all participants will benefit from the opportunity to discuss their experiences of PE in a closed environment and also hopefully learn about the nature of research protocol in the process.

If you have any specific concerns or further questions about the exact nature of my research or the focus group interviews themselves please do not hesitate to contact me via e-mail at a.scattergood@chester.ac.uk or via telephone on 01244 513449.

Many thanks for your support and thank you for taking the time to read this letter.

Andrew Scattergood (BSc, PGCE, MSc)
University of Chester

Appendix 2



Participant information sheet

**The engagement and participation of mainstream male key stage four (KS4) pupils
in education, physical education (PE) and school sport**

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Thank you for reading this.

What is the purpose of the study?

The aim of this research is to examine the views of current male Year 10 and 11 pupils (Key Stage 4) in relation to their experiences of school generally as well as physical education and school sport more specifically.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen because you are a current Year 10 or 11 male pupil at the school.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. A decision to withdraw at any time, or a decision not to take part, will not affect you in any way.

What will happen to me if I take part?

You will be involved in a focus group with around 6 of your school friends. This will simply be a discussion regarding your views on school, PE and school sport. You will not be named or identified in any way and all your responses will be kept strictly confidential. You will be able to express your own views as you like and respond to those of the others in your group.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

There are no disadvantages or risks foreseen in taking part in the study.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

By taking part, you will be contributing to the current knowledge regarding pupils of your age and their experiences at school and in PE/school sport lessons more specifically.

What if something goes wrong?

If you wish to complain or have any concerns about any aspect of the way you have been approached or treated during the course of this study, please contact Professor Sarah Andrew, Dean of the Faculty of Applied Sciences, University of Chester, Parkgate Road, Chester, CH1 4BJ, 01244 513055.

Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?

All information which is collected about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential so that only the researcher carrying out the research will have access to such information.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results will be written up into a PhD thesis. Individuals who participate will not be identified in any subsequent report or publication.

Who is organising the research?

The research is conducted as part of a PhD in Sport and Exercise Sciences within the Department of Sport and Exercise Sciences at the University of Chester. The study is organised with supervision from the department, by Andrew Scattergood, a PhD student

Who may I contact for further information?

If you would like more information about the research before you decide whether or not you would be willing to take part, please contact:

Andrew Scattergood – a.scattergood@chester.ac.uk

Thank you for your interest in this research.

Appendix 3



Participant information sheet

The engagement and participation of mainstream male key stage four (KS4) pupils in education, physical education (PE) and school sport

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask us if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Thank you for reading this.

What is the purpose of the study?

The aim of this study is to conduct an in-depth single case-study in order to gain a greater understanding of the attitudes and levels of engagement of white working-class adolescent boys (14-16) in relation to education generally and PE and school sport more specifically. This part of the research project is aimed at examining the views of teachers and support staff surrounding these topics via a one hour semi-structured interview.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen because you are a current member of staff at the school.

Do I have to take part?

It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. A decision to withdraw at any time, or a decision not to take part, will not affect you in any way.

What will happen to me if I take part?

You will be involved in a semi-structured interview to be organised at a time and place of your convenience that will take approximately one hour. All your responses will be anonymised and treated in the strictest confidence.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

There are no disadvantages or risks foreseen in taking part in the study.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

By taking part, you will be contributing to the current knowledge regarding staff views on KS4 white working-class males pupils and their attitudes towards, and involvement in education, PE and school sport.

What if something goes wrong?

If you wish to complain or have any concerns about any aspect of the way you have been approached or treated during the course of this study, please contact Professor Ken Green, Head of Department Sport and Exercise Sciences, University of Chester, Parkgate Road, Chester, CH1 4BJ, 01244 513424.

Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?

All information which is collected about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential so that only the researcher carrying out the research will have access to such information.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results will be written up into a PhD thesis. Individuals who participate will not be identified in any subsequent report or publication.

Who is organising the research?

The research is conducted as part of a PhD in Sport and Exercise Sciences within the Department of Clinical Sciences at the University of Chester. The study is organised with supervision from the department, by Andrew Scattergood, a PhD student

Who may I contact for further information?

If you would like more information about the research before you decide whether or not you would be willing to take part, please contact:

Andrew Scattergood – a.scattergood@chester.ac.uk

Thank you for your interest in this research.

Appendix 4



Name of Researcher: Andrew Scattergood

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions. ☐
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary, that my responses will be audio recorded, and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason and without my legal rights being affected. ☐
3. I agree to take part in the above study. ☐

Name of Participant

Date

Signature

Researcher

Date

Signature

Appendix 5



Focus Group Question **Introduction**

- Remind all participants of their right to withdraw from the research at any time
- Assure all participants that all their answers will be treated in the strictest of confidence and their names will not be mentioned in anyway either during or after the study

- Provide a brief overview to all participants on how the focus group will work and some guidelines on language and respecting the opinions of others etc

Education and School Life

- What do you think about school generally? How would you describe your time at school so far? Has this changed in any way since Year 7? (How, Why?)
- What would you say are the most important reasons for coming to school? What is the most important thing to you about coming to school? (friends, qualifications, socialise, future career)
- Do you ever think about what you will do when you leave this school?
- Do you ever speak about school with your parents?
- How would you describe their attitude to school?
- How would you describe your friends' attitude to school?
- Is doing well at school (academic) important to you or are other things just as, or more important? Why are some of these things just as important? (friends, fighting, girls)
- How would you describe your relationship with your teachers?
- How would you describe your behaviour in lessons/around school?

Physical Education and School Sport

- How would you describe your experiences of PE so far whilst at school? Have these changed at all as you have moved in to Year 10/11?
- Which activities do you most prefer in PE?
- Is there anything that you would have liked to do more of in PE? Is there anything you did too much of?
- Are there any sports/activities that you've never done and would have liked to?
- Are there any activities that you really dislike? How do you react to these activities when they are on the timetable/curriculum (behaviour/participation)
- Do you think that you have any say in what you do in PE? Is this important to you?
- How would you describe your relationship with the PE staff? Is it any different from 'academic' staff? Why is this the case?
- Are you involved in any after school sports clubs or teams? Which? Is there any reason why you like to come to a club/play for school?
- Is there anything not offered after school which you would like to play? How would you describe your involvement in school sport/clubs?

Leisure and Spare Time

What makes up most of your free time outside of school?

Do you take part in any sports outside of school? What ones and where would you play and who with (recreational/competitive)?

Do you play any of these as a result of playing them at school or in PE? If not who influenced you take part in sport out of school and at what age?

Several of you have mentioned The Cage? Can you tell me about this and what you do when you are there? Expand